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Europe's No. 1 Style Magazine

GRAZIA

Easy Chic

Volume 15 Issue 09
December 2022
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+216
GIFTS THAT SPARK JOY

BEST OF BEAUTY

- 90s THROWBACK
- MAKE-UP AS ART
- PRODUCTS ON OUR RADAR

MAGAZINE KING

DEEPIKA PADUKONE

Charting New Horizons with her Self-Care Journey

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VISIT…

Europe's No 1 Style Magazine

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DEEPIKA PADUKONE is wearing a shoulder detailed turtleneck sweater, neon satin a-line mini skirt, all **Louis Vuitton**

PHOTOGRAPHS
ERRIKOS ANDREOU/ DEU: CREATIVE MANAGEMENT

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AN ENDURING LEGACY

Photograph KEEGAN CRASTO

From the EDITOR'S DESK

End-of-the-year notes are always nostalgic, hinged between new digits and resolutions and also because we're not quite ready to let go of the year that has been. While I'm still trying to wrap my head around the fact that 2022 has indeed almost whizzed by, I'm glad I stuck by what I had set out to do – to savour each day and live (well, at least a little bit) in the moment (and not just for the weekends as the memes advocate). So far, a little shift in perspective has gone a long way in improving my mood and outlook – and practising gratitude really works. It's not all roses; I will add that I'm still doomsday scrolling, cannot stick to no-complain days, or get enough sleep!

It's been an especially good year for our cover girl too. Not only has Deepika Padukone firmly established herself as a force to reckon with on the global fashion stage as an ambassador for luxury brands like Louis Vuitton and Cartier, but she's ending the year on a new high by finally launching her self-care brand. But the best part about her journey is having done it her way – "I've always been quietly confident, and it stems from self-preservation. I don't find the need to make a splash with everything I do. I enjoy doing things that feel organic and authentic".

The December issue also aims to create an intersection between beauty and self-care and how mental health is intrinsically a part of this conversation. From experimental make-up as a form of self-expression and art to breaking down the current 90s mood with shimmering sienna and moody browns, beauty in 2022 was all about the body, mind and soul.

See you next year,

Mehernaaz

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MAGAZINE KING

FOLLOW ME ON INSTAGRAM
@mehernaazdhondy

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grazia.co.in

Have you logged onto grazia.co.in yet?

Our website is our complementary arm, combining the best of what the magazine offers with its own flavour and take on current events around the world. Fashion news haute off the press, beauty product reviews, DIY hacks, and previews and reviews of the biggest dos around the country – we've got it all covered in easy reads.

GRAZIA MOST LOVED BRANDS 2022

GUESS WHICH **BRANDS** ARE ON OUR **RADAR** THIS TIME AROUND

MAGAZINE KING

Over the last year, we've grown into much more conscious and mindful consumers. But with many consumer brands out there, with their varying products and marketing approaches, it can be difficult to discern which ones deserve your attention and love. How do you decide which fashion or beauty products should be added to your closet or whom you can trust for the best at home? Well, we're here to help you out

COMING SOON

#GRAZIAMOSTLOVEDBRANDS
www.grazia.co.in

FASHION CHARTS

Your best buys in stores right now

2

WRAP SKIRT, UNITED COLORS OF BENETTON, ₹ 2,390

There's nothing like a pop of red to inject a little holiday cheer in December. Pair with a novelty knit and chunky boots for a cool-girl vibe.

1

CRYSTAL ENCRUSTED WATCH, ANNE KLEIN, ₹ 11,495

We're leaning towards timeless classics this month. Think: A delicate timepiece with a mother-of-pearl dial, traditional roman numeral markers, and a crystal-encrusted bezel.

MAGAZINE KING

3

BELTED DRESS, ZARA, ₹ 4,590

A cool-weather favourite – pleather adds just the right amount of toughness to any look. Wear this olive-draped number with anything from strappy heels to a pair of velvet mules. There's no going wrong with this one.

5

SLIP DRESS, BOOTS, GLOVES, HANDBAG, ALL BOTTEGA VENETA, PRICE ON REQUEST

Walk into the party season with a lingerie inspired iridescent slip dress. It's easy to dress up or down, eye-catching and a sure conversation starter.

Fashion Director PASHAM ALWANI

4

LOGO BELT, FENDI, PRICE ON REQUEST

There's no easier way to embrace a 90s aesthetic than with an iconic FF buckle with a stud fastening and monogram detail. Cinch your fave shirt dress or wear it with bootcut jeans and a basic Tee.

6

'D-BEE' CHOKER, DIOR, PRICE ON REQUEST

A fun and modern take on the classic pearl necklace, this bee-detailed choker has our vote. Channel your inner Audrey Hepburn and string it over an LBD.

7

FRINGED BLOUSE, H&M, ₹ 2,999

Embrace a glam 80s vibe with this sequinned fringe crop top, a pair of wide-leg black trousers and OTM platform sandals.

8

MESH TROUSERS, JEAN PAUL GAULTIER, ₹ 35,052 APPROX

Jean Paul Gaultier's 'Cyber' collection revisits the iconic styles that debuted in the designer's memorable show in 1996. The playful polka dots in mesh lean to a super psychedelic feel, and we're here for it.

MAGAZINE KING

9

'COUSSIN PM' HANDBAG, LOUIS VUITTON, PRICE ON REQUEST

The perfect plus one for the holiday season, this pillowy monogram bag in Christmas colours is guaranteed to lift spirits. Wear it cross-body with the strap, as a chain baguette, or carry it under the arm – the possibilities are endless.

10

'LOUBI EYE' SLIP ON FLATS, CHRISTIAN LOUBOUTIN, PRICE ON REQUEST

Add whimsical flair to your #OOTDs with this pair of flats. The embroidered caricatures, fringe detailing and 3D effect will ensure you're never bored looking down.

BEAUTY CHARTS

The best beauty buys we are eyeing right now

1

PH PURE REPAIR MASK, ₹ 3,500

Think hair botox in a tube. Made with hyaluronic acid to strengthen and nourish damaged and bleached hair, this mask gives the hair a voluminous, strong, and soft look. Apply it on washed and towel-dried hair by first dividing it into sections and gently massaging it. Leave it on for 10 minutes and rinse with warm water.

2

MEMO PARIS MADURAI MAD JASMINE EDP, ₹ 25,400

Created by perfumer Gaël Montero, this new fragrance from the 'Fleurs Bohèmes' collection is inspired by Montero's trip to Madurai – the warm air, the flower sellers, the smells of spices, the jasmine *sambac* offerings to the gods, and the creamy scent of sandalwood around the temples is what guided the composition. This fragrance is like a colourful market stall in a bottle.

MAGAZINE KING

3

ESTÉE LAUDER NEW ADVANCED NIGHT REPAIR EYE SUPERCHARGED GEL-CRÈME, ₹ 5,300

This new eye cream will supercharge your eyes for a brighter, wide-eyed look. Formulated with FR-Defense™ technology, it helps resist visible environmental irritation, and Chronolux™ Power Signal Technology helps boost the skin's visible youth-generating power. The silky gel-creme texture is lightweight, gentle on the under-eye area, and dermatologically tested.

4

KANPEKI MILKINA CRÈME CLEANSER, ₹ 680

With a non-stripping and gentle formula, this cleanser acts as a make-up remover, eliminating dirt and grime from the skin. It also mimics the pH value of our natural skin and strengthens the skin barrier, leaving you with dewy, plump, and healthy skin.

5

IS CLINICAL LIP PROTECT SPF 35, ₹ 2,250

This broad-spectrum protection lip balm with SPF 35 combines all-physical transparent sunscreen actives with vitamin E, coconut oil, elderberry extracts, and linoleic acid to help condition and defend the lips from environmental aggressors.

Words SANJANA SALUNKHE

10 HOT STORIES
EVERYONE'S BEEN TALKING ABOUT

THAT'S A WRAP

As the year comes to a close, we look back on defining trends, emotionally-charged collections, and fashion history-worthy moments

Words **NIDA NAEEM**

1

Hadid's viral moment on the Coperni runway

ICONIC BODYCON

A moment that will forever be etched into our brains: Bella Hadid on the Coperni Spring/Summer 2023 runway, having a dress spray-painted onto her body. Partners in design and life, Sébastien Meyer and Arnaud Vaillant put on the show at the Salle des Textiles at the Musée des Arts et Métiers in Paris. Described as a "celebration of women's silhouettes from previous centuries", their creation was made possible by an innovative material called Fabrican. The viral moment took many back to Alexander McQueen's Spring 1999 showcase, where a white dress, donned by model Shalom Harlow, was spray-painted in chaotic graffiti-esque streaks of black and yellow by robots. Almost a quarter of a century later, spectators were awed by what can be achieved at the intersection of fashion and technology.

DARE TO BARE

As we finally resumed hard-partying weekend plans this year, the desire to supercharge sex appeal came naturally. The cut-out trend has carried over particularly well from last year. *Euphoria's* Maddy Perez, played by Alexa Demie, inspired many to push their sartorial envelope and bare some skin with her memorable black dress from the first episode of the popular show's second season. On the Fall/Winter 2022 runways, we saw designers like Nensi Dojaka, AMBUSH, and Supriya Lele went a step further with cut-outs and experimented with draping, embellishments and more. They gave us many renditions of the trend, proving that the sheer variety of placement and size options makes the design element supremely adaptable. From breathtakingly risqué to relatively modest, there was a cut-out cut out for everyone.

POLITE SOCIETY

OTTOLINGER S/S 23

Alexa Demie in *Euphoria*

Zendaya for Valentino

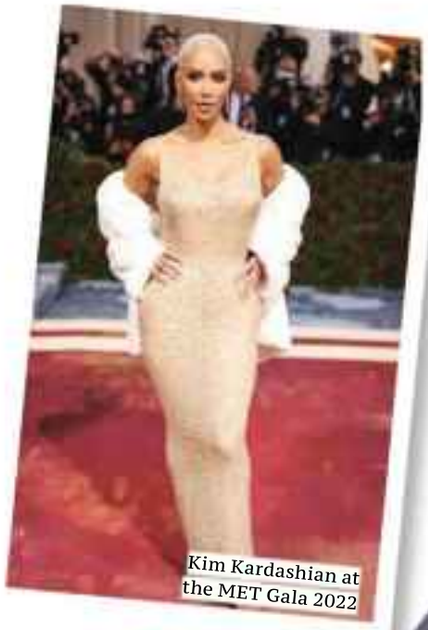
THINKING IN PINK

A lot has been said about hot pink in 2022 – and the chokehold it had (and still has) on us. We found it impossible to escape the unapologetic hue, which shot to popularity with Valentino's signature 'Pink PP' collection, consisting of all-pink looks that challenged one to look away. Following this, Zendaya and F1 star Sir Lewis Hamilton were styled by hotshot stylist Law Roach in a campaign by the maison that pushed us all to reconsider pink's reputation as a 'soft' colour. Valentino's penchant for pink fuelled – and perfectly coincided with – the rise of Barbiecore. This hyperfeminine aesthetic took off after the release of images of Margot Robbie as Barbie for the hotly anticipated Greta Gerwig directorial. Girlbosses everywhere rejoiced as wearing searing brights became acceptable and even admirable.

MAGAZINE KING

BELIEVE IT OR NOT

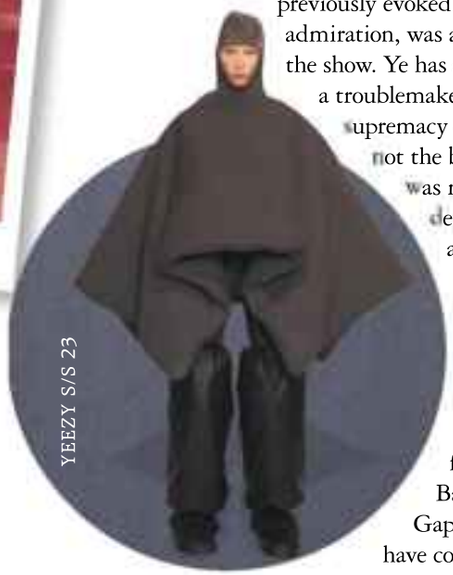
Kim Kardashian in Marilyn Monroe's 'Happy Birthday Mr President' dress for this year's MET Gala caused quite a stir and for all the wrong reasons. Kardashian acquired the crystal-encrusted nude dress from the Ripley's Believe It or Not! museum in Los Angeles, which Monroe originally wore at President John F. Kennedy's 1962 birthday celebrations. Even though Kardashian claimed that she lost weight to fit into the dress and that preserving the garment's condition was her top priority, it sustained damages: A ripped zipper, missing beads and sequins, and shredded fabric by the hooks. Many textile historians agreed that the sixty-year-old dress should've never been taken out of its glass case and worn again.



Kim Kardashian at the MET Gala 2022

NAY TO YE

Controversy seems always to follow Ye (formerly known as Kanye West), but this year, he took things too far. In a now infamous showcase by Yeezy at Paris Fashion Week's September edition, Ye wore a T-shirt with the slogan 'White Lives Matter'. The rapper has been vocal about supporting former American President Donald Trump. It is worth noting popular right-wing commentator Candace Owens, who has previously evoked Ye's public admiration, was also present at the show. Ye has always been a troublemaker, but white supremacy chic was perhaps not the best look. He was met with well-deserved backlash, and Adidas, Ye's longtime collaborator and stakeholder of Yeezy cut ties with him, as did fashion giants Balenciaga and Gap. Actions do have consequences.



YEEZY S/S 23

FENDI RESORT 23

BAGGING THE IT BAG

Fendi celebrated 25 years of its iconic 'Baguette' at New York Fashion Week. First cemented in cultural consciousness by Carrie Bradshaw from *Sex And The City* ("it's not a bag, it's a Baguette"), the silhouette has enjoyed quite the revival over the past two years, sported under the arm of many a Y2K fashion girlie. Creative directors Silvia Venturini Fendi and Kim Jones threw a grand silver jubilee celebration for the iconic bag while showcasing the brand's Resort 2023 collection by reimagining its dimensions and adding a touch of bejewelled glamour. Tiffany & Co. created an exclusive stippled sterling silver version, sported by Hadid in a Tiffany-blue jumpsuit. Sarah Jessica Parker crafted a capsule collection in collaboration with Silvia Venturini Fendi, where each 'Baguette' was inscribed with Carrie Bradshaw's memorable line.

MAGAZINE KING

DI PETSA S/S 23

GUCCI S/S 23

DIRRTY PARTY

We're all fatigued from seeing airbrushed visions of perfection on our feeds. The return of casual Instagram and the sighting of a crying selfie or two seems to pander to the nostalgia for simpler times. In the same vein, we also witnessed a return of the Olsen Twins brand of late 2000s hipster fashion, dubbed 'indie sleaze' for Gen Z. This unfiltered aesthetic is a willful (and slightly grungy) mishmash of colours as well as oversized shirts worn as jackets, ripped stockings, skinny scarves, midriff-baring tops and wired headphones. Versions of the style also popped up at Spring/Summer 2023 shows, like at Alessandra Rich's. Maybe it's a response to super-polished Y2k looks; maybe it's just young people throwing caution to the wind.

ALESSANDRA RICH S/S 23

Ashley @best.dressed

HOME IS WHERE THE HEART IS

The past couple of years have reiterated the value of kinship and honouring those we love. Designers tapped into deeply personal sentiments to craft collections as an ode to their families and motherhood. No one can forget the Gucci Twinsburg show, where former creative director Alessandro Michele populated the runway (which turned out to be his last for the storied fashion house) with 68 pairs of twins dressed in identical outfits. He revealed that the showcase was a tribute to his two mothers – his mother and her twin sister, two extraordinary women who deeply impacted him. At the Spring 2023 showcases, Marine Serre featured mommy-and-me looks, as did Elena Valez and Dimitri Petsa. Designer Jason Rembert of Aliétte brought spring home with a heartfelt collection inspired by the memory of his late mother and driven by the motivation to appreciate our loved ones while they're still around. In a full circle moment, he ended the show with his daughter in his arms and tears in his eyes.

10 HOT STORIES

2

OUT OF OFFICE

All the essentials to pack for your end-of-the-year getaway

Curating a holiday capsule wardrobe while juggling work and your December social calendar can seem daunting. We've put together a perfect mix of everything you need for a hassle-free pre-flight packing session, including carry-on luggage, a mix of lightweight accessories, printed separates, and day-to-night flats that will have you ready for a well deserved vacay.

ETRO

Button down dress, **Coach**, ₹ 32,312

BRANDON MAXWELL

Printed button down shirt, **United Colors of Benetton**, ₹ 2,399

Printed trousers, **United Colors of Benetton**, ₹ 3,499

OSCAR DE LA RENTA

Nothing says holiday style like bright printed separates. From big florals to psychedelic prints – there's something for everyone.

Shorts, **Zara**, ₹1,999

FENDI

Monogram hold-all, **Gucci**, price on request

Embroidered tote, **Christian Louboutin**, ₹ 1,91,580

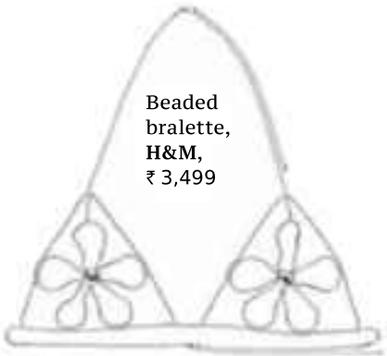
Hardside suitcase, **Victorinox**, ₹ 20,787

Monogram suitcase, **Louis Vuitton**, price on request

Embossed tote, **Tory Burch**, ₹ 48,652

From rolling hard-shell cases to spacious carry-on totes, these luggage options will keep you looking chic, from security checks to baggage claims.

MAGAZINE KING



Beaded bralette, **H&M**, ₹ 3,499

Charm necklace, **Joolry**, price on request

Acetate sunglasses **Rosvin Bugs**, ₹ 5,490

Gold plated earrings, **Swarovski**, ₹ 14,500

Straw hat, **Forever New**, ₹ 2,600

VALENTINO

Printed scarf, **Fendi**, price on request

A modern take on classic gold hoops, oversized sunnies, charm jewellery and a printed scarf that works double duty – the only extras we're adding to our bags.

JIL SANDER

Quilted, **Dior**, price on request

JOHANNA ORTIZ

Embellished, **Fizzy Goblet**, ₹ 3,890

Embellished, **Charles & Keith**, ₹ 6,499

Printed, **Michael Kors**, price on request

Shell detailed, **Aprajita Toor**, ₹ 4,699

Two-tone, **Cai**, ₹ 1,999

Stay comfy during your downtime with a pair of embellished or textured flats – guaranteed to work with all your off-duty looks.

MAGAZINE KING

10 HOT STORIES

3 STRAIGHT-TALKING

There are no rules for what on-trend is or suitable for an occasion regarding party dress codes. One could argue that we live in a precarious bubble where all sartorial bets are off and playing dress-up is encouraged, feel designer duo **Pankaj and Nidhi Ahuja**

The Pankaj & Nidhi girl is fun, vibrant, and in charge of her sartorial predilections

The designer duo with Ananya Panday

MAGAZINEKING

The last few years have seen turmoil being triumphed by the human spirit. It has become abundantly clear that personal choices and freedoms are non-negotiable. From street protests and courtrooms to stadiums, it has become clear that people will go to great lengths to have their voices heard but will support those whose voices must be heard. Every aspect of life is a moment of self-expression, and clothing tops a long list of avenues to make one's voice heard.

It's not easy making choices in this age of information overload. We live in a world of influencers, local celebrities, and international fashion icons that are immediately accessible and present varying views on life and sartorial choices. Every message asks you to be yourself but often is conflicting, ridden with commercial interests.

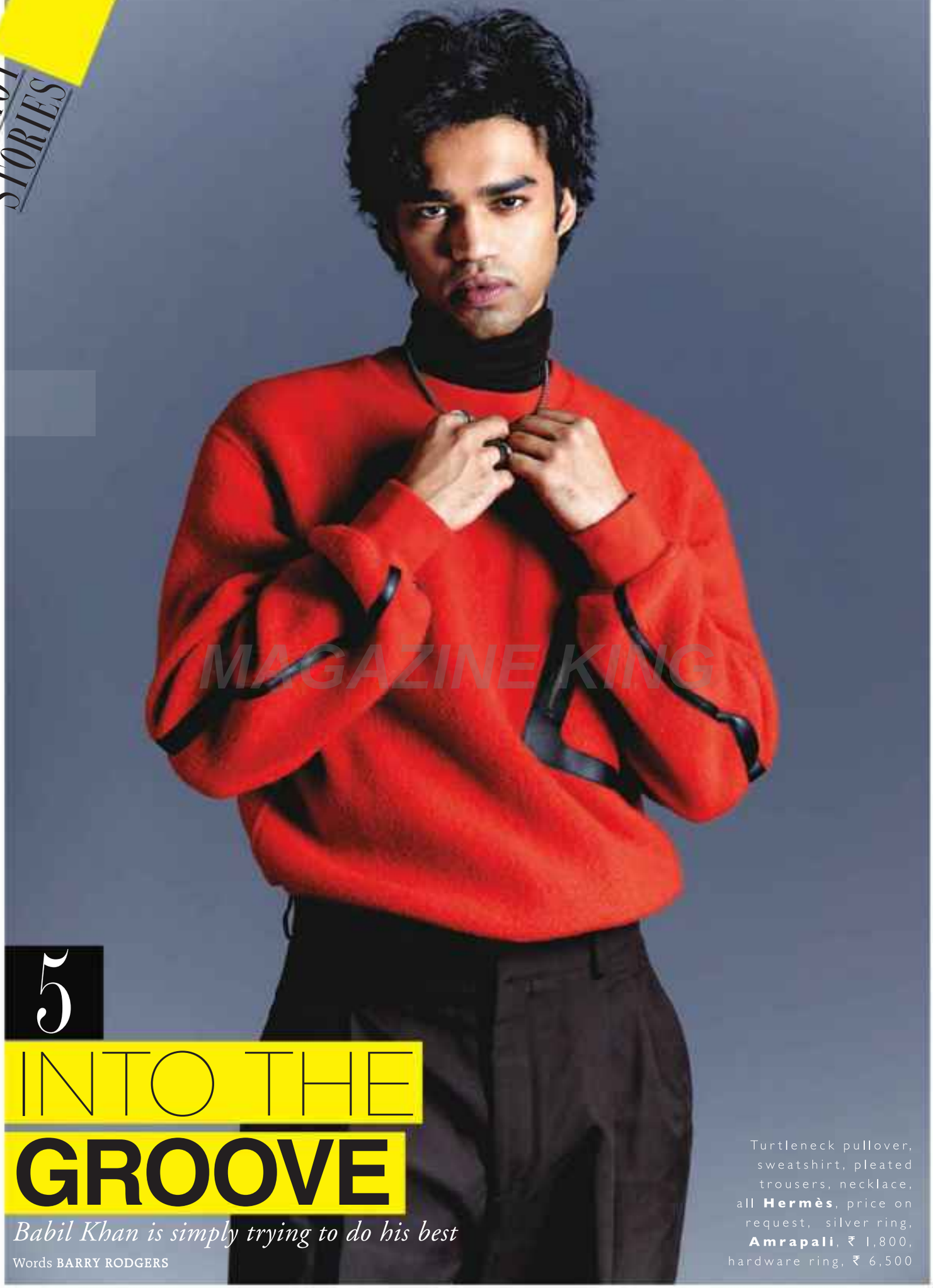
Hearteningly, Gen Z can most filter out the advertising and product push to sift through and prioritise what matters to them. Perhaps it's this realisation that drives the way that people dress today. They don't want to follow trends blindly or become victims of a blitzkrieg of social media messaging. They choose to embrace maximalism one day and minimalism the next, to wear *jhumkas* to a pool party and a crop top to a business meeting – not out of irreverence but out of a desire to be comfortable in one's skin.

FOR THE CULTURE

Over the last decade, there's also been a determined shift towards reclaiming our culture. Despite physical borders, pop culture has become all-pervasive, with South Asian leads part of global shows and Bollywood celebrities becoming the faces of international brands. With this audience also comes an interest and hunger for Indian authenticity. From grassroots sustainability to yoga and handicrafts, the Indian aesthetic is returning to mainstream fashion worldwide, and especially in India. Urban fashion enthusiasts are choosing to honour their roots while making them their own. We see young women in their mothers' old kurtas paired with denim or their grandma's exquisite handloom silk saris being worn again to red carpet events; even new-age grooms are reconditioning their fathers' *achkans*. The juxtaposition feels so true to the glocal nature of how we dress.

We have seen enough trends come and go to understand they can be maddening, and we need to stay rooted by choosing to be authentic. A resurgence in this direction is an antidote to the media-celebrated consumerist ideal of fashion – new and flashy, lacking in the craft history of our people.

As parents to a pre-teen girl, we're hopeful her generation will be confident to make the right choices not just sartorially but in life also. She will need us as responsible role models to look up to. Will she choose a ball gown or a sari for her graduation ceremony? Only time will tell.



MAGAZINE KING

5 INTO THE GROOVE

Babil Khan is simply trying to do his best

Words **BARRY RODGERS**

Photographs YUSUF LOKHANDWALA
Jr. Fashion Stylist NISHTHA PARWANI

Turtleneck pullover, sweatshirt, pleated trousers, necklace, all **Hermès**, price on request, silver ring, **Amrapali**, ₹ 1,800, hardware ring, ₹ 6,500

Babil Khan is not worried about being compared to his father, the late Irrfan Khan. Instead, he's excited about continuing his father's legacy of doing great films. "When I signed my first film (*Qala*) there were a few nerves initially because you think: 'what if I fall flat?'" And while he doesn't care for the term 'debut', he's excited to be in the Anvita Dutt directorial, *Qala*. Dutt's *Bulbbul*, as many would remember, stood out for its scathing visual grammar – blood-red, dense, atmospheric. "Certainly, a film is not a radio play. The aesthetics of it had to be right. I wanted to capture the fantastical suspension of belief one has while listening to fairy tales," Dutt said in a 2021 *Grazia* interview. Her choice of a fairy-tale aesthetic, which is essentially also the case in *Qala*, is to convey a more significant point about the horrors of patriarchy and self-indulgent men, which wouldn't have probably come to a male director.

The Hindi-language film, produced by Karnesh Ssharma's Clean Slate Filmz, takes place between the 1930s and the 1940s. Triptii Dimri plays the titular singer, whose path to fame winds past an uncaring mother, questionable personal choices, and sexual predators. The principal cast includes Swastika Mukherjee as Qala's mother, Khan as a singer who competes with Qala, and Amit Sial as a music composer. "Anvita paints a fantastical world that draws you in. It's almost Shakespearean in that it makes you sit up and take notice of the characters. When people question why I chose to play a supporting part in my first film, I tell them that I wanted to support Triptii; I wanted to support a female lead. I am also doing this for my mother. She's always silently supported my father and me," he says.

CONFESSIONS

For the 23-year-old, Shakespeare's *Comedy of Errors*, his first foray into acting, set a love for the arts in motion but not without a hitch. The play is one continuous "who's on first?" gag that irreverently jounces around domestic unrest and dirty puns. This is probably the most workman of the plays Khan read by the hydrocephalic bard. However, the careful reader can still glean a few tentative peeps of the unique mastery of the English language that indisputably defines Shakespeare as an artist wholly unto himself. "You can imagine how nervous I was when I forgot the lines on stage. I was 12. I was in school, in the middle of an important scene. I decided to improvise in Hindi, which set in motion something completely unexpected – the audience could not get enough. Even though I made some real blunders, I looked into the crowd to see if my dad was smiling at the faux pas. He wasn't in attendance. While it did disappoint me, I've learned to make peace with the idea that my dad loved his craft (he was shooting for a film at the time). But he loved me equally," he says.

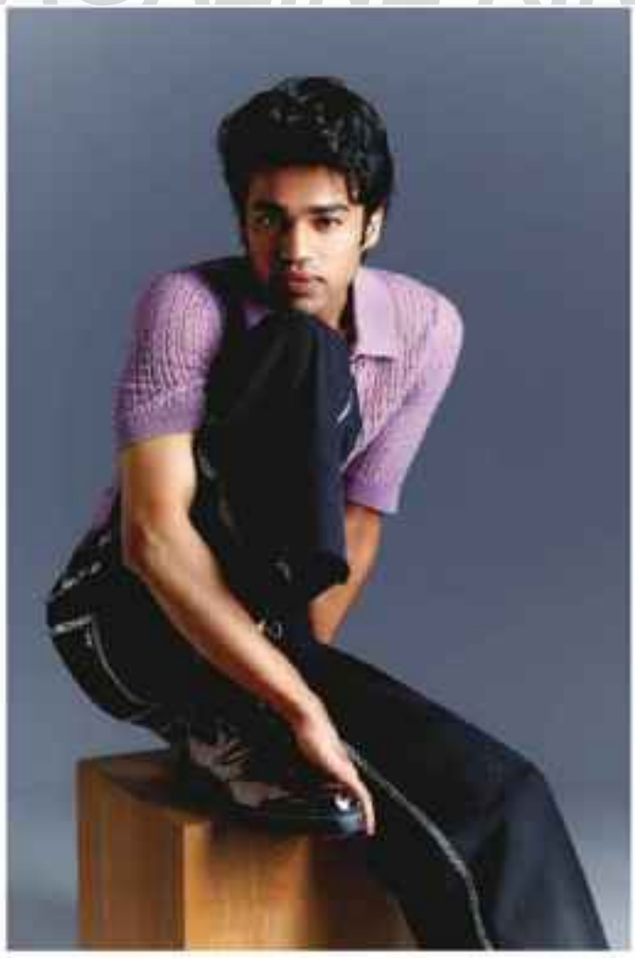
Khan is honest about his relationship with his father. No doubt it cannot reflect complete truth – who of us can always see all of ourselves and our loved ones? But whatever confusions, and perhaps a few self-protective instances of skewing the remembered personal behaviour towards a more exculpatory memory, Khan has no issues admitting that fatherhood for his late father, and manhood for that matter, was always a bit of a work in progress for him. "Even though none of us figured it out, dad readily admitted that he was constantly learning. You must understand that I grew up in a household where Tchaikovsky was appreciated alongside Jean-Luc Godard, so now you know where I get the intense brooding from. Blame it on my dad," he says jokingly.

But is Khan looking to build a similar filmography as his father? No, comes the reply. "Why would I want to ape his wonderful journey? I want to build my clout – whether it be acting in an art-house or masala film, cinematography, or even behind the camera, I love movies, so I will enjoy the medium regardless of how I engage with it," he says.

From debating the morality of cinema at bedtime; celebrating weirdness; teaching lessons on respecting the opposite sex; sharing the pleasure of watching art on screen; coping with the unsporty child in organised sports; supporting individuality – one theme Khan is increasingly becoming conscious of as a person – "and I know this probably sounds trite" - is the importance of celebrating individuals for being themselves. "My dad allowed me to have my own interests and aspirations. While other parents spend so much time and energy striving on behalf of their kids, my parents have always let their kid be who he wanted to be," he says.

"My dad allowed me to have my own interests and aspirations. While other parents spend so much time and energy striving on behalf of their kids, my parents have always let their kid be"

MAGAZINE KING



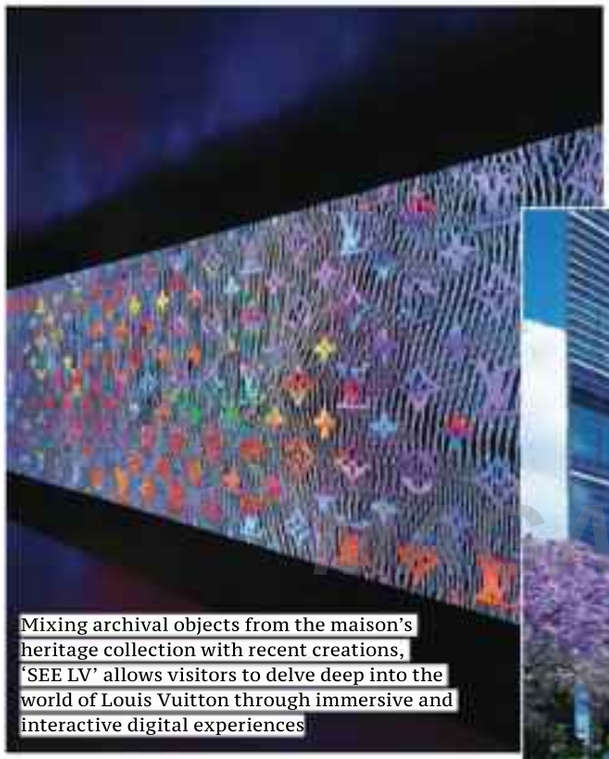
Knitted polo, **Shivan & Narresh**, ₹ 36,950; denim jacket, jeans, both **Leh Studio**, ₹ 16,800 and ₹ 14,800 respectively; gunmetal pendant necklace, **Outhouse**, ₹ 7,850; stackable ring, enamel ring, both **Misho**, ₹ 6,200 and ₹ 5,665 respectively, silver stone ring, **Amrapali**, ₹ 6,500; ankle boots, **Hermès**, price on request

Make-up **Stephen Jadav**
Hair **Swapnil Pawar**

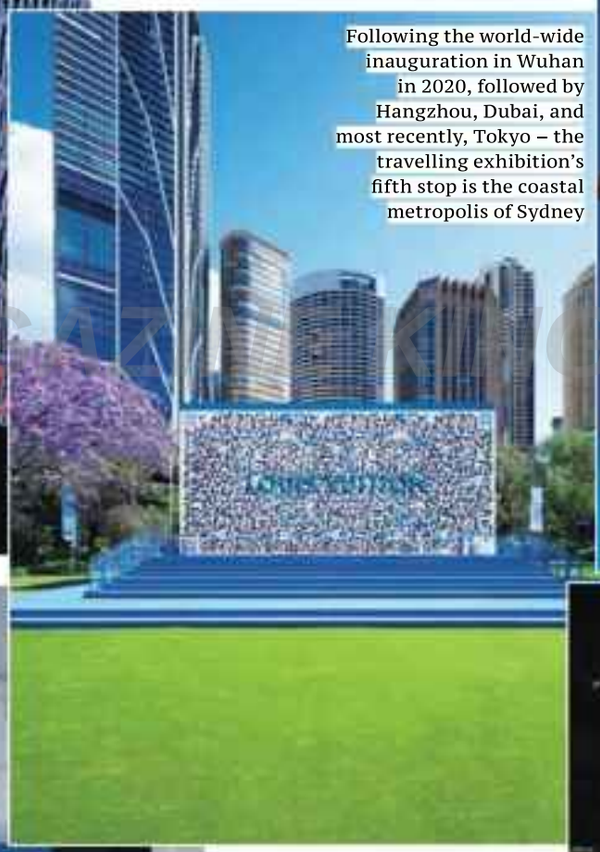
10 HOT STORIES

6 BACK TO THE FUTURE

A peek into 'SEE LV' – a travelling exhibition that follows an immersive journey covering 160 years of the legacy brand – all in the heart of Sydney



Mixing archival objects from the maison's heritage collection with recent creations, 'SEE LV' allows visitors to delve deep into the world of Louis Vuitton through immersive and interactive digital experiences



Following the world-wide inauguration in Wuhan in 2020, followed by Hangzhou, Dubai, and most recently, Tokyo – the travelling exhibition's fifth stop is the coastal metropolis of Sydney

The house's iconic monogram leather goods are artfully transformed into a lifesize kangaroo by artist Billie Achilleos

The brand's contributions to the invention of luggage typologies shows how each one has been a cornerstone in the evolution of new lifestyles and travelling habits

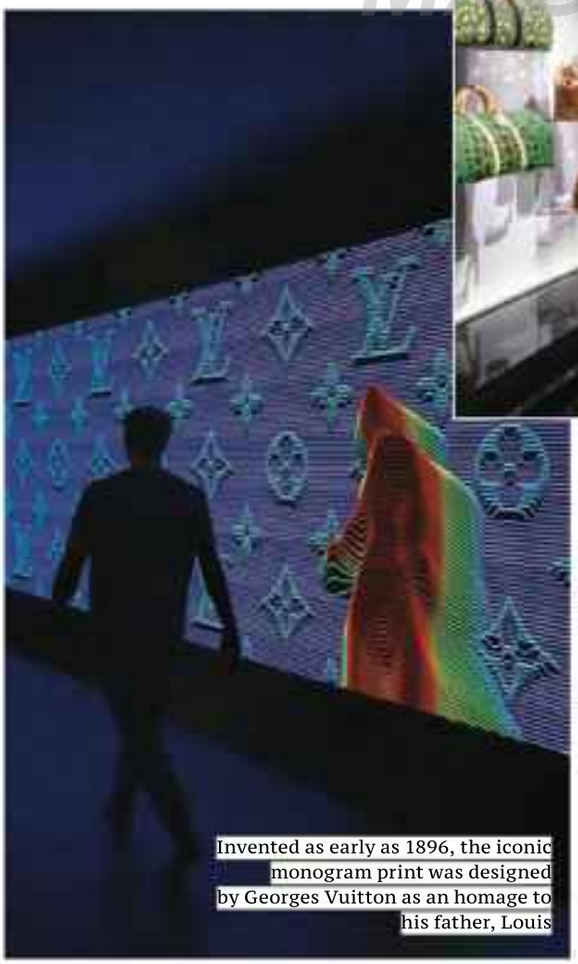
A leather lounge chair designed in 2016 for the Louis Vuitton 'Objets Nomad' collection in collaboration with Marcel Wander Studio

WORDS PASHAM ALWANI

The exhibit houses men's and women's looks created by Virgil Abloh and Nicolas Ghesquière, like Kim Jones and Marc Jacobs before them. Each designer is present through looks from their first and more recent shows

From the 'Steamer Trunk' to the 'Speedy', 'Noe' to 'Twist', a wall of Louis Vuitton's most iconic bags display how these signature shapes have continued to evolve over the years

Discover the maison's latest literary launches and publications in a specially curated library space. Visitors can delve into the house's catalogue of over 100 titles



Invented as early as 1896, the iconic monogram print was designed by Georges Vuitton as an homage to his father, Louis

20-year-old Louis Vuitton in a portrait by Turkish digital artistist Refik Anadol, created using artificial intelligence

Bottega Veneta's Sardine Top Handle Bag, which features the house's signature Intrecciato weave

8 SYSTEMS FAILURE

Social media's time of reckoning is here. Are fashion brands going to stay put or rock the boat?

WORDS **NIDA NAEEM**

MAGAZINE KING

Opening Instagram first thing in the morning is the most enduring ritual for many of us. Coffee and books come and go, but doomscrolling is forever. Or is it?

It's impossible to imagine daily life without the ubiquitous presence of social media. Yet, after a decade of supercharged growth that witnessed new means of connecting with people and creating and consuming content, social media has reached a melting point.

LOSING FAITH

Headlines from the past month were rife with reports of mass layoffs at two of the world's most powerful social media giants. According to a report released by Meta, it laid off 13 per cent of its workforce – which amounts to 11,000 employees – owing to unexpectedly low revenue in the last quarter. In a public announcement to address the matter, CEO Mark Zuckerberg indicated that the fallout was a result of diminished e-commerce in the post-pandemic world, as well as a host of privacy changes by Apple that have changed the way data is collected and ads are targeted on Meta platforms.

Elsewhere, Elon Musk's controversial take over of Twitter has had many wringing their hands over the future of the app, and fittingly so. After firing half of the social media network's staff, Musk introduced paid 'blue ticks' – giving users the option to pay a small fee of $8 to get verified instead of waiting for the Twitter team to determine if their clout was valid. Predictably, parody accounts spurted, spoofing brands and public figures to comic effect. Many brands proceeded to withdraw all advertising from the platform. Luxury fashion's enfant terrible Balenciaga deleted its account entirely.

Tanya Mehta, who leads content at homegrown label Bhaane, chimes in: "I feel like Balenciaga is following in the footsteps of Bottega Veneta [by deleting its social accounts]. When Daniel Lee came on as BV's creative director, there was a lot of curiosity about how he would reinvent the Italian heritage brand. He went ahead and made cult pieces. And I think that is a perfect example to show that you don't necessarily need social media to create sales. Every celebrity and influencer wore everything he made, and even when BV launched in India through e-commerce portals, it maintained its status as a highly coveted brand."

When Daniel Lee was interviewed about the luxury brand's social media presence (or lack thereof), he pointed out how social media oversimplifies content. Mehta adds, "When you see how Reels have taken precedence just by following an algorithm that allows them more visibility than static or video content, the oversimplification becomes apparent. Because you're just watching something passively instead of really engaging and possibly reading something. It is telling of the current state of social media, where we're looking to operate out of convenience."

BOTTEGA VENETA F/W 22

Praachi Kapse, who heads the influencer marketing agency PeopleKind, tells me many of her clients stopped taking on Twitter collaborations over the past year. "What is happening currently after Musk's takeover is a very different conversation, but a lot of our talent had probably started noticing the downfall of Twitter in the past 12 to 18 months. It didn't seem like a creative space anymore; it didn't seem like a knowledge-seeking platform anymore. There were just too many people with too many opinions, and you'd rather be on Instagram and YouTube, which have a smaller but more engaged audience," she adds.

This begs the question: Where is fashion headed on social media? Is there even anywhere to run? We dip into the murky waters of social media's present and future to decode what might work for brands, influencers and other stakeholders.

TERMINALLY ONLINE

'DM to order' is a phrase we're all too familiar with. The pandemic saw a flurry of small businesses cropping up on Instagram, retailing fashion, beauty and lifestyle wares exclusively on the platform. Some diversified and built their websites once their D2C business took off, but Instagram proved to be an effective initial site for testing the viability of many brands. There are two aspects behind this: inexpensive advertising and community-building opportunities.

Heaps of ultra-specific data harvested from every click and search helped brands accurately target potential customers. Moreover, brands that focused on being aesthetically pleasing and regularly pushed out content (read: Reels) saw a rapid spike in followers. Niche aesthetics that are not available at more prominent brands and mainstream e-commerce retailers, combined with the usage of Gen Z lingo, meant that many of these small businesses quickly amassed a base of loyal fans eagerly waiting for every drop. There was also word of mouth, with young people taking pride in telling their friends that they got their accessories from a so-and-so small business.

But things are changing regarding how ads are shown to netizens. Considering Apple's recent privacy policy changes and the popularity of iPhones, we're still waiting to see how smaller ventures, who might lack the resources and insight to quickly alter their digital advertising strategy, will cope.

"Today, any brand is synonymous with its social media presence. It's just so intuitive that when somebody mentions a new brand, the first thing you'll do almost involuntarily is look it up on Instagram," Mehta says.

Interesting stories form the crux of Bhaane's social media. "We were keen on establishing a strong sense of storytelling from the get-go. We don't have a hyper-aggressive approach to social media where we're flooding our consumers with content. We've always been a community-first brand," she explains.

Bhaane is a good case study of creating content that reflects the brand's values. Its feed showcases creatives and friends of the brand in a way that doesn't feel contrived. Even topical posts have a playfulness to them, and both Bhaane's content and clothes draw from Indian culture without taking either too seriously. This magic formula of self-assurance and relatability is working well for the label. "Our approach is integrated with what our consumer is. The Bhaane consumer is the freelancer, the intellectual. It's somebody who's inclined towards multiple disciplines, whether that's art, theatre or design. So even though we are a fashion brand and creating apparel, we integrate these narratives into any content we create. We're not inclined towards trend-driven content," elaborates Mehta.

Bhaane's A/W 22 collection

Bhaane's timeless pieces, termed 'elevated generic', resist trends, and so does their content.

WE'RE ALL FATIGUED

Bigger brands that aren't necessarily aiming for discovery through their social activity but are more engagement-oriented stand to benefit massively from community-led storytelling. It's the key to fostering organic relationships and producing authentic content that moves away from mind-numbingly repetitive formats and audio. Creating with intention is key, according to Mehta.

But things get more complicated when it comes to sponsored advertising. Shreya Soni, founder and CEO at The Ideas Lab, an experiential marketing agency, says: "With Meta, brands are being nudged to amp up their promotional and ad spends but aren't necessarily getting the expected traction or conversion because there is less transparency or understanding about how the algorithm changes. Most brands aren't hitting the feeds of the targeted audience."

In the age of scrolling fatigue, Soni says brands should be highly selective with the creators they work with. "Gone are the days where you do a blanket spend on the first 50 influencers or creators based on the number of followers. Now the metrics are getting smarter and more nuanced. While analysing those parameters, you must question whether they are right for your brand. So that's the bit that's changing because spending and promoting on those mediums are getting more expensive. If you have the budget, do your homework well with the selection of creators you're working with. See who their audience is and co-build video assets to tell that story better. That way, you have a greater chance of reaching the right audience and pushing your brand story further," she says.

"With Meta, brands are being nudged to amp up their promotional and ad spends but aren't necessarily getting the expected traction or conversion"

Photographs RID BURMAN / BHAANE

MAGAZINE KING

9 MUSIC ACTIVISM

Genre-defying musician Anoushka Shankar talks about her upcoming three-city India tour and the world premiere of her single 'In Her Name'

Words ANAND SINGH

"We let convenience dictate our lives so much that we ignore important questions just because they're unsettling. I'm afraid this is a symptom of a deep rot." For nine-time Grammy-nominated musician (who has two nominations this year, including one for a collaboration with last year's Pakistani Grammy winner Arooj Aftab), film composer, and activist Anoushka Shankar, music's highest honour isn't what she wants to talk about. Shankar is one of the few modern-age artists who have consistently produced genre-defying yet headstrong records that wish to speak and not just entertain. Perhaps the finest example of this is *In Jyoti's Name*, a track from her 2013 album *Traces of You*, made to draw attention to the horrific attack on Nirbhaya in 2012.

This year marks the 10th anniversary of the incident, and Shankar is back with a rendition of *In Jyoti's Name* to remind us of the "uncomfortable questions she believes we have forgotten." The track, *In Her Name*, is set to premiere on the 16th of December during her upcoming India tour. "I think it's time to ask those questions again because it has been a decade now and what has changed? We talk about coming together, but everyone, all around the world, seems to not care about their women." The song's now called in *her* name, Shankar says, to point towards the universal nature of the violence against women we see daily.

Shankar believes the deeply personal nature of good music makes it an effective tool for activism. "I've always seen music as the most profound means of expression, and what's more personal than the angst and dissent in you? When music becomes a tool for activism, say the blues becoming a symbol of African-American resilience, the goal is to connect to audiences better. People start questioning things when they say, 'Oh, what is this thing that is hurting this artist I love so much?'" she says. However, the need to connect to audiences, Shankar believes, shouldn't become the sole driving force in someone's work. "You must have faith in yourself and the many people that consume your work. Of course, you want people to enjoy and share your music, but that doesn't mean you start making music with that in mind. After a point, you need to believe that people want to listen to what you *truly* want to say."

With her new three-city India tour (which kicks off at the Good Shepherd Auditorium in Bengaluru on the 11th of December), Shankar aims to take chances that she hasn't yet in an attempt to find new ways to connect with her audience. "A big part of the show involves a quintet, which I haven't done before, so I hope that feels new and fresh. I'm also performing with artists I know and love for an audience I know and love. It feels like a homecoming for me."

MAGAZINE KING

Label ALERT 10

This month, we take a look at contrasting approaches to party dressing

IF YOU LOVE: Embroidered classics
THEN YOU WILL LOVE: EastFourteen
WHO: After switching to fashion design in 2014, Valerie Gosar enrolled at Parsons School of Design in New York City. Following this, she worked with prestigious design houses such as Oscar de la Renta and Payal Khandwala before launching her slow fashion pret label in 2020. EastFourteen was named after the place pivotal in her design journey – Gosar conceptualised her brand in the cafes and classrooms at East 14th Street in NYC, where she lived and studied. She often names the pieces after places in NYC. The green and white of the East 14th street signs are etched in her heart and EastFourteen's branding.
WHY: In the 'post-pandemic plastic' world, Gosar's main focus is to ensure mindful production and post-production. EastFourteen's shirts, kaftans, and more dressy bustiers and suit dresses are adorned with impressionistic raffia embroidery, a 100 per cent biodegradable material made from the leaves of palm trees. The signature textural chevron pattern is a breath of fresh air in embroidery, combined with an interplay of leftover fabric for low-waste patterns.
WHERE: *www.east14.in*, @studioeast14, Pernia's Pop-Up Shop
PRICE RANGE: ₹ 5000-28,000

WEAR: Show off the whimsical sheerness of the 'Nolita' bomber jacket by wearing it over a cream bustier. Switch out column pants for a micro-mini if you're heading out for end-of-the-year shindigs. A small box bag will do for arm candy and contrast perfectly with the fluid organza of the jacket.

IF YOU LOVE: Edgy tailoring
THEN YOU WILL LOVE: Alter-X
WHO: After completing a course in fashion design from the Institute Of Apparel Management, Gurugram, Nitish Arora worked as a menswear designer and eventually landed in Milan to continue his fashion education at Istituto Marangoni. He started travelling extensively and during this time, became deeply drawn to Europe's underground music culture. Arora takes inspiration from the euphoria that rave culture and electronic music create. He dreamt up Alter-X on the dance floor of a warehouse somewhere in Europe. After completing his term in Milan, he travelled back to New Delhi and kickstarted his brand as a community of free thinkers, movers, and spirits.
WHY: The label's capsule collection, 'ACIDIC', is a physical embodiment of feelings, physicality, and freedom and takes its name from acid, a sub-genre of techno music born in the 90s. Arora pays significant attention to the construction of structured power shoulders on silhouettes sans gender or body type. He combines ethically sourced merino wool with hardware details to envision an alternative space that is undefined and inclusive. Moreover, all Alter-X offerings can be made-to-measure, bringing the meaning of 'tailored' full circle.
WHERE: *www.alter-x.com*
PRICE RANGE: ₹ 25,000-35,000

WEAR: Make your way through high-energy music festivals in the 'Undercover' blazer dress paired with dark slacks, silver chain jewellery and a slicked-back hairdo.

Compiled by NIDA NAEEM

Safe Space

Deepika Padukone is shifting old paradigms and starting new conversations

MAGAZINE KING

Photographs **ERRIKOS ANDREOU/ DEU: Creative Management**
Fashion Director **PASHAM ALWANI**
Words **BARRY RODGERS**

MAGAZINE KING

Shoulder detail turtleneck sweater, neon satin a-line mini skirt, both **Louis Vuitton**, price on request

There's a quiet resilience to Deepika Padukone. It comes through with her impressive body of work that she's carefully crafted through the years, playing disparate roles that embody who the modern Indian woman is. It comes through when we engage with her over a Zoom call ("being vulnerable is powerful," she tells me emphatically). It comes through when she talks passionately about embarking on an entrepreneurial journey with the launch of her self-care brand, 82°E, and when she discusses how important it is to build a self-sustaining ecosystem to safeguard her mental health.

Throughout her career in sports, fashion, and films, Padukone has operated from a place of curiosity and non-judgment; she's started hard conversations about mental health, cracked open taboos, and has looked for connection and resonance everywhere she can find it. "I've always been quietly confident, and it stems from self-preservation. I don't find the need to make a splash with everything I do. I enjoy doing things that feel organic and authentic," she says.

"I've always been quietly confident, and it stems from self-preservation. I don't find the need to make a splash with everything I do. I enjoy doing things that feel organic and authentic"

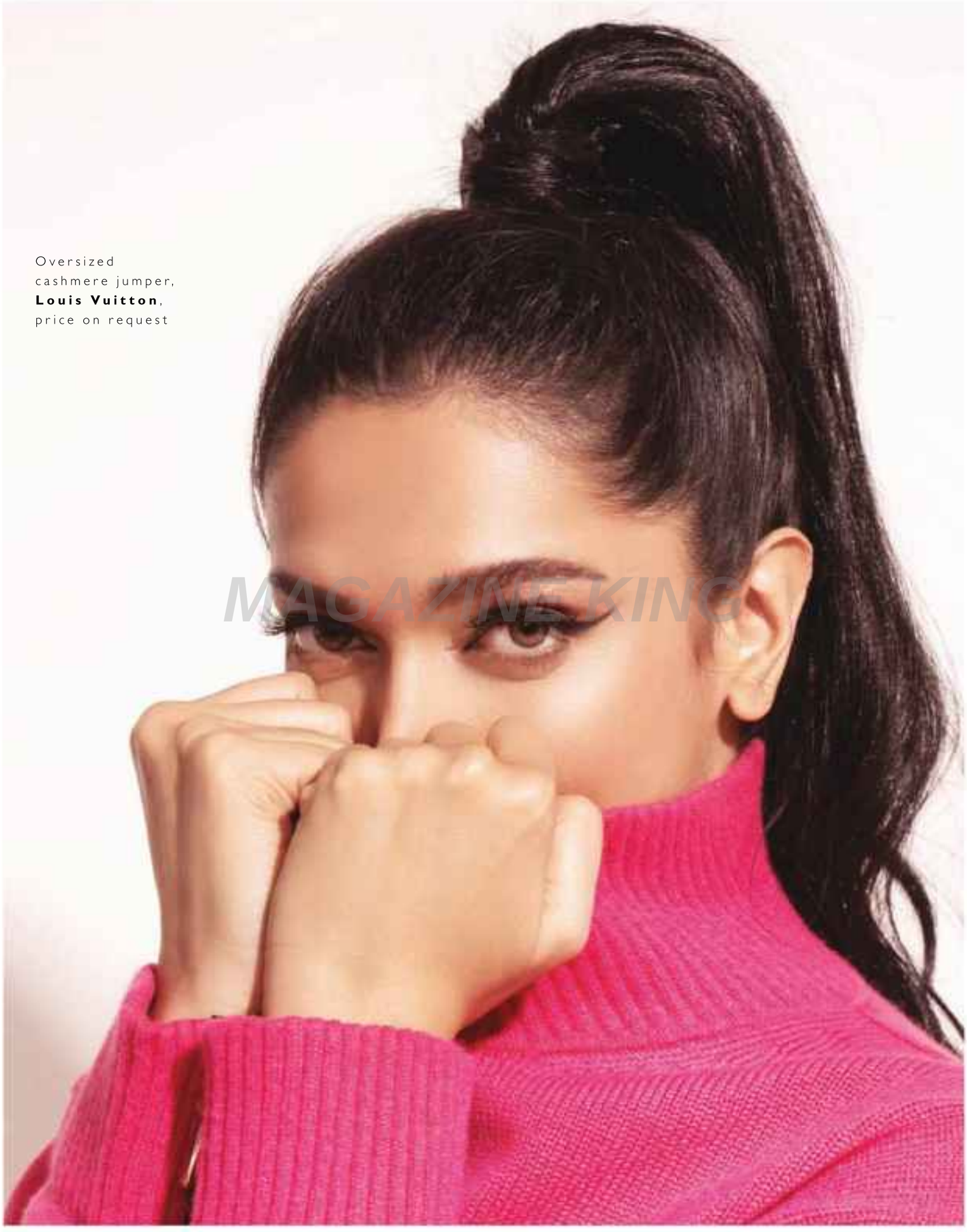
MAGAZINE KING

The actor straddles two different worlds gracefully; she effortlessly made the Cannes red carpet her playground as a jury member for the prestigious film festival earlier in the year. She's been spotted at Louis Vuitton runway shows worldwide as their global ambassador (since May this year) and also became the ambassador for Cartier in October 2022. She visited Chinna Chinna Ikkam village of Tiruvallur district, about 80 kilometers from Chennai, as she faced six women in pink saris, all Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHA), to discuss in detail the numerous mental health issues prevalent in their communities – postpartum depression among new mothers, suicidal tendencies and stigma-induced trauma amid people with disabilities. Flanked by her mother, Ujjala, counsellor Anna Chandy on one side, sister Anisha, and friend and Live Love Laugh Foundation trustee Ananth Narayanan on the other, Padukone interacted with activists, health workers, caregivers and the media.

In a candid chat, Padukone tells us why self-care is more about replenishing her soul, what she most looks forward to in a day, and why she won't apologise for being ambitious.

Facing page: Oversized cashmere jumper, monogram detail cargo pants, 'Archlight' slingbacks (India exclusive capsule), all **Louis Vuitton**, price on request

MAGAZINE KING



Oversized cashmere jumper, **Louis Vuitton**, price on request

MAGAZINE KING

GRAZIA: With 82°E, you're taking India to the world. Were you nervous or empowered, or both?
DEEPIKA PADUKONE: It would have to be both. When it comes to sharing something so personal with the world, it makes you a bit nervous. I always approach life and work with a curious, open-minded, and service-centric focus, which holds to what we've created. We ask questions about all of it. We believe people can take what serves them and leave what doesn't. We recommend what we love and think is worthy of your time. But it's also empowering because being completely honest with our intentions with the brand meant that we were selling a transparent experience.

G: Being in the public eye and straddling fame and other commitments, how important has it been to create your self-sustaining ecosystem?
DP: It comes with having different experiences in life. And as you navigate it all, you realise that it becomes essential to create small pockets of happiness that help you consistently nurture your mind, body and spirit. I've spoken to many women over the years who have successfully carved out time for self-care beyond the little things we do daily. I've consciously built a safe space for myself through rituals that help me stay true to who I am. For me, it is a meeting ground for you when you need assistance or need to be alone, for others who need the same. It's a simple concept with a significant impact.

Having a safe space is hugely important to me. There's something powerful about not apologising for being who you are, what you're experiencing, or what you've done. You feel less afraid when you feel loved and confident instead of regretful and defensive. And when you feel less afraid, you can process and work towards change more freely.

I make time for the ones I love because they are the ones who form the crux of my ecosystem. It's important for me to have them around.

G: Is being human, in this age of social media where people constantly present perfection, something you've allowed yourself to be?
DP: Being in the public eye will open you up to scrutiny – that's natural. But that hasn't stopped me from being open to new people and experiences. The uncertainty can sometimes feel scary or at least unfamiliar if you're not accustomed to it, but I've tried to be brave and vulnerable. As scary as it is to open up to the world about things that make you human, communicate your fears and be honest about how you choose to evolve. Every time you open up, you're working towards a solution instead of closing yourself off.

> "As scary as it is to open up to the world about things that make you human, communicate your fears and be honest about how you choose to evolve. Every time you open up, you're working towards a solution instead of closing yourself off"

MAGAZINE KING

G: There is tremendous pressure to be likeable when you are a woman, or you risk being misunderstood, especially when a woman is ambitious. How have you perceived ambition?
DP: I've always been competitive because that's just the sportsperson in me. Do I apologise for being ambitious? No. It is not something we should apologise for. In most cases, ambitious women are viewed as pushy, selfish and unlikeable. I don't necessarily think success is so off-putting, but the desire for something more inspires feelings of disdain. We all, irrespective of gender, deserve to want more. We all deserve to dream big.

G: You've always played empowered women on screen. Do you perceive these characters through your own life experiences? Do they have to, in some way, echo your strengths and vulnerabilities as a person? Or do you enjoy playing characters that are far removed from yourself?
DP: I've always played characters that imbibe a little bit of who I am, but I've always enjoyed essaying roles that are starkly removed from who I am too. It's about finding a balance in telling a story convincingly. Veronica (in *Cocktail*) was nothing like me in real life. She's fiery, feisty and fierce. But deep down, she had an emotional core that longed for love and friendship. Her uniqueness intrigued me. In *Piku*, I had no frills or crutches to rely on; I had to keep it as authentic as possible.

MAGAZINE KING

MAGAZINE KING

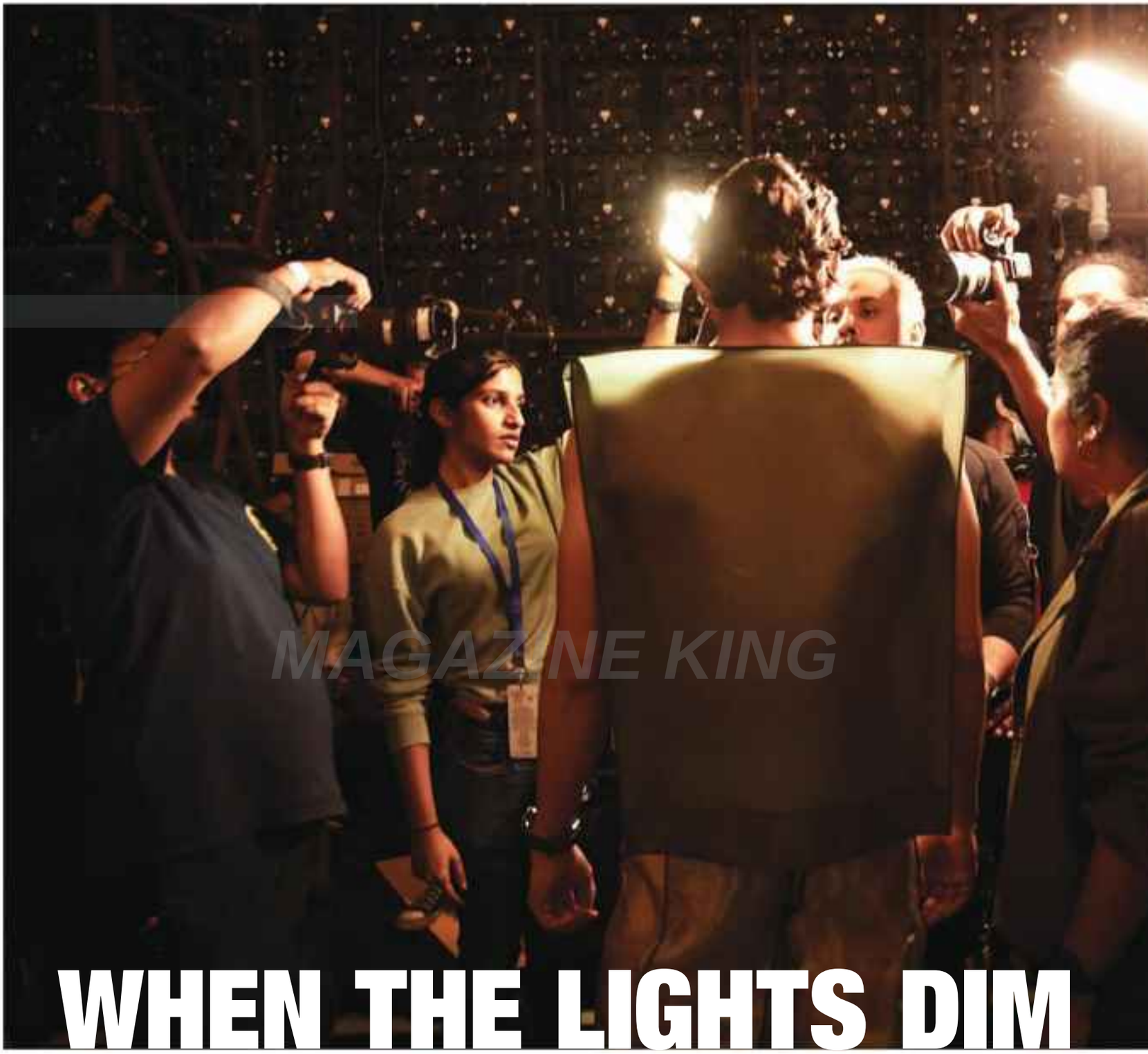
'Hot Pink' quilted jumper, snap button leather skirt, 'LV Circle' reversible belt, 'Sparkle' slingbacks (India exclusive capsule), all **Louis Vuitton**, price on request

MAGAZINE KING

Marinière' bateau knit blouse, 'Pop Pink' straight cut jeans,'LV Circle' reversible belt
all **Louis Vuitton**, price on request

Hair **YIANNI TSAPATORI at FAZE MANAGEMENT,** Make-up **ANIL CHINNAPPA**
Assisted by (styling) **NISHTHA PARWANI, NAHID NAWAAZ**
Production coordinator **YUSUF LOKHANDWALA**

MAGAZINE KING



MAGAZINE KING

WHEN THE LIGHTS DIM

For new stakeholders in the fashion industry, the relentless cycle has complicated prioritising their mental health

Photographs **YUSUF LOKHANDWALA**
Words **BARRY RODGERS**

Digital brand manager Debarati Roy is always trying to play catch up. I met her backstage just before one of the evening shows during the recently concluded FDCI x Lakmé Fashion Week and she seemed reasonably flustered. "I'm constantly looking for ways to build visibility for the fashion brands I've been entrusted with. It's all about keeping the social media spotlight on them. That's what I get paid for, and I don't enjoy not delivering on the promises I make," she says. The Fashion Design Council of India and designers Amit Aggarwal and Ritu Kumar are just some fashion behemoths

"Social media professionals have demanding roles that require critical, creative thinking, organisation and collaboration across teams. Those demands, coupled with the 'always on' nature of social media, make burnout a real challenge"

for whom she narrates visual stories.

Roy believes a common misconception is that social media jobs are glamorous and as simple as posting entertaining, witty Tweets or colourfully curated Instagram posts. "It's frustrating when friends, family and sometimes even colleagues oversimplify your role as a social media manager. Social media professionals have demanding roles that require critical, creative thinking, organisation and collaboration across teams. Those demands, coupled with the 'always on' nature of social media, make burnout a real challenge," she says. Also, being in charge of a brand's social media image online means dealing with the trolls. Roy constantly checks her clients' feeds on her phone because she's terrified a tweet will have a typo or a post will somehow offend someone. "You should have thick skin and be able to prioritise what is just noise and what feedback needs to be addressed," she says.

MAGAZINE KING

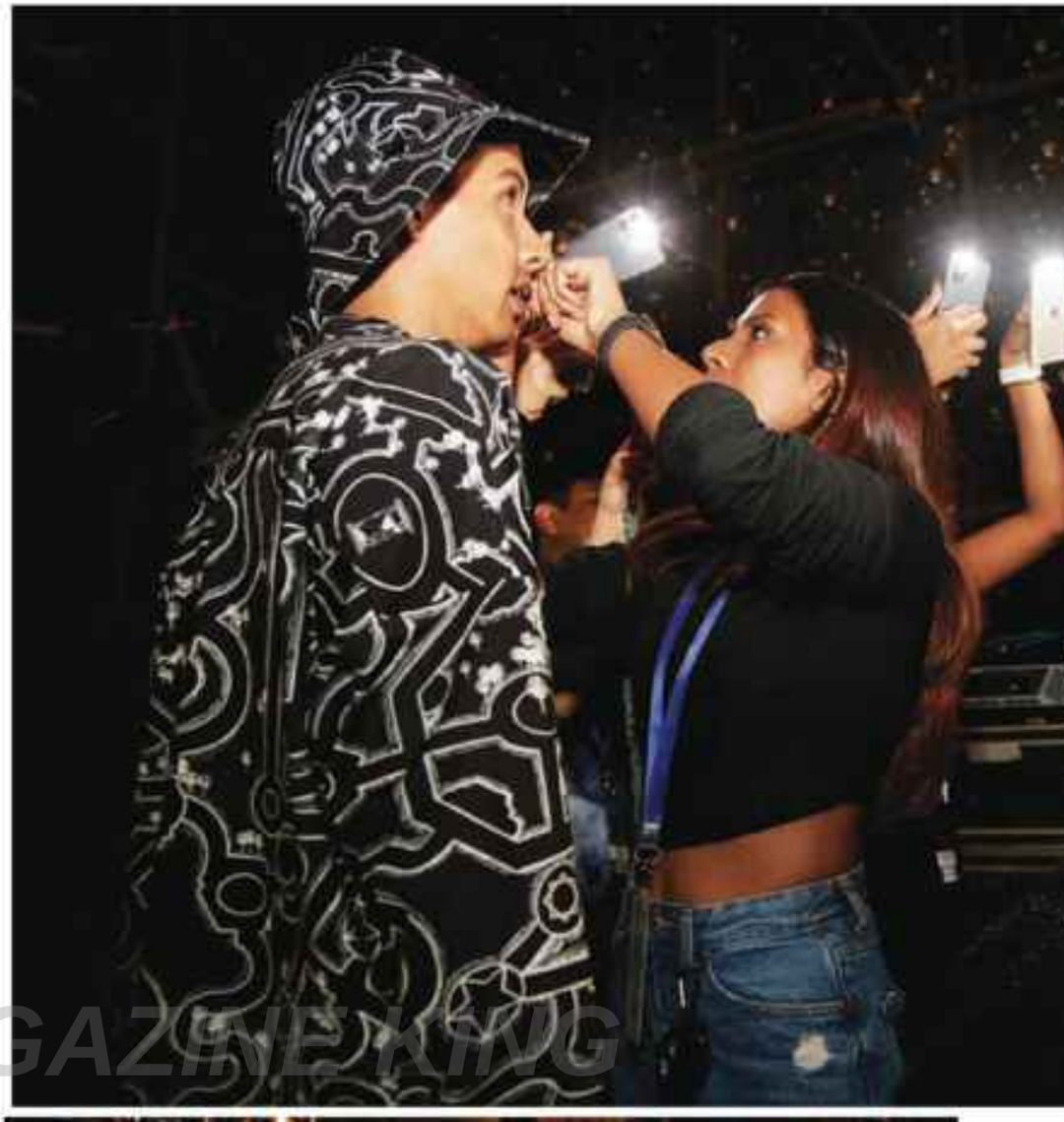
Fashion's unique pressures in an age of viral content, social media reach, influencer growth, and Instagram Reels leave its many new stakeholders with mental health issues. Take Roy, for example. The morning after the last day of fashion week, she woke up to her phone's vibrations only to realise it wasn't ringing. As cell phones become increasingly commonplace, questions about how they may influence our everyday lives are raised, especially for the professionals who work tirelessly behind the scenes to generate content for fashion designers and their label's Instagram feeds. Referred to as 'phantom vibration syndrome', it is a phenomenon where a user whose phone is set to vibrate if an incoming call or text is received experiences the phone vibrating when it is not.

The interest in this phenomenon stems from what its noteworthy pervasiveness may say about our contemporary technological situation. Delhi-based psychologist and life coach Asha Saxena says this heightened sensitivity may, in the absence of actual vibrations, "predispose a person to misinterpretation of sensory stimuli or imagined vibrations, resulting in the perception of mobile phone vibrations that are not really there. Those with strong reactions to their messages (either because of their desire to maintain relationships or their fear of losing them) could potentially report frequent phantom vibrations."

PUSH & PULL

Shakeel Sutarwala, co-founder of Sqube Brand Relations, a boutique PR and marketing agency based in Mumbai, believes there's more that goes into building a fashion brand now than just page-three parties. "When I started, before 2000, the idea of brand building and strategy was non-existent. The fashion media landscape was quite traditional. Fashion magazines worldwide relied on advertising dollars from large luxury houses. The media covered fashion news from an editorial, journalistic point of view. And parties were seen as fun gatherings for meeting industry friends. There was no added pressure to socialise heavily or stick around to be seen. You decided the terms of engagement," he says.

Now, Sutarwala believes, social media has made everything immediate. "We're playing catch up and staying on all the time. We understand the need for brands to stand out to compensate for the loss of visibility, awareness, and sales during the pandemic. And so, it is our job to craft specific and personalised strategies to achieve each brand's ultimate goal by using the right balance of traditional tools and innovative ones that will help them stand out. Also, maintaining media relations is important. We are bombarded with requests for exclusive interviews. It's



"The industry has become so cutthroat that everyone wants to be always in the spotlight. And building that top-of-mind recall for all of them has taken a massive toll on my health. I am always firefighting crises"

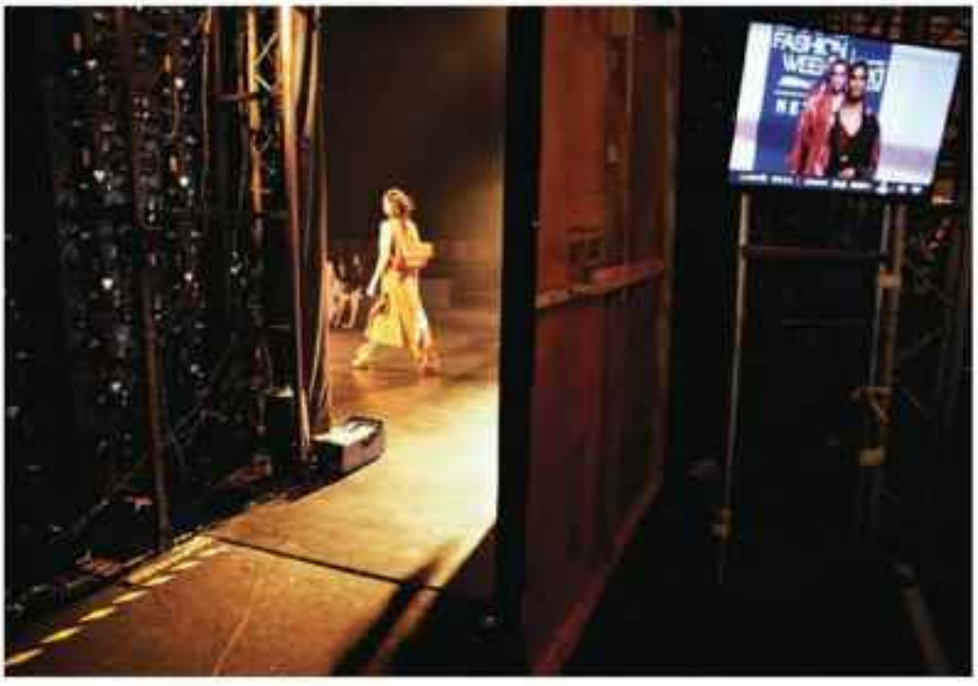
a tricky game to keep everyone happy," he says.

PURSUIT OF PASSION

In her book *The Promise of Happiness* (2010), author Sara Ahmed prophetically interrogated the meaning of happiness and questioned if the popular concept was worth the sacrifices that we make, exploring how the ideal of happiness has been used to justify forms of unfair expectations of labour. "How better to justify an unequal distribution of labour than to say that such labour makes people happy?" Ahmed asks. "How better to secure consent than to describe it as the origin of feeling good?"

While Ahmed doesn't mention fashion specifically, any person who has endured high levels of stress in the fashion industry – or even spent too many hours modifying their appearances to fit fashionable ideals – would probably agree that fashion uses false promises of "happiness" as a way to justify these sacrifices.

Mumbai-based brand manager, growth marketeer and founder of performance marketing agency The Mad Lad Company Manav Vijay Prithyani, once found happiness in hustling for his clients, mainly comprising fashion labels. But now, he understands the value of slowing down and taking things in his stride. After chronic stress led to a cardiac arrest in October while on holiday in the Phi Phi Islands, Prithyani has decided to drop most of his clients and work remotely.



"In the current social media landscape, most of the brands I service want top billing. The industry has become so cutthroat that everyone wants to be always in the spotlight. And building that top-of-mind recall for all of them has taken a massive toll on my health. I am always firefighting crises," he says.

Prithyani says that the pressure to deliver stems from his clients' constantly

MAGAZINE KING

MAGAZINE KING

Backstage at FDCI x Lakmé Fashion Week

"Work can become so personal that we tend to lose sight of things that truly matter – ourselves. I keep asking a pertinent question: 'How can fashion take care of its stakeholders, the people running it?' It starts with having the difficult conversations around mental health, being compassionate and less invested in perceptions"

evolving needs to position themselves favourably online. "In helping these labels update their operating models and adjust their strategies, sales channels, and digital marketing, I am on calls throughout the day; some go past midnight." His frenetic pace has prevented him from fostering romantic relationships, confessing he would like a companion but wouldn't want to enter a partnership because it would be unfair on someone to deal with his erratic schedule.

Fashion designer Shubhika Sharma, founder of Papa Don't Preach by Shubhika, finds it challenging to manage the pressures of cultivating a social media presence online, much to the chagrin of her social media team. The brand has seen an uptick in popularity over the years, especially among Gen Z shoppers, who resonate with the label's inclusive ethos. "The more visibility your brand gets means that much more added pressure to be seen and heard. And I can't blame my team for pushing me because it's ultimately about fulfilling my ambitions," she says.

The relentless pace, hunger for newness, and increasing global sourcing demands prevent Sharma from regularly checking in on herself. "Work can become so personal that we tend to lose sight of things that truly matter – ourselves. I keep asking a pertinent question: 'How can fashion take care of its stakeholders, the people running it?' I believe it starts with having the difficult conversations around mental health, being compassionate and less invested in perceptions," she says. However, Sharma admits that it becomes doubly challenging for smaller labels to stay rooted in the business because they get embroiled in a rat race to remain relevant. They may also need to worry about financial sustainability.

And while she does give in to keeping her social media active, she goes easy on superficial posts and keeps things sharply focused on her brand. "My therapist has helped me divide my life into decades, allowing me time to put in the hard work now but also giving me something to look forward to – a life away from the spotlight. It's reassuring because I don't view life as this never-ending loop of money, ambition, and success anymore, but something that should also be savoured and enjoyed," she says.

ALL MADE UP

Make-up is not just a means to an end – as an art form, it is an end in itself. We explore the worlds of three make-up artists who step outside the norms of beauty to provoke, challenge and confront

Words **NIDA NAEEM**

MAGAZINE KING

A Halloween make-up look by Singh for fashion label Aroka

As someone who never steps out of the house without a swipe of blush and a bit of brow mascara at the very minimum, I give make-up a lot of power over how I feel about myself. But I'm deeply inspired and, sometimes, even moved by those who use make-up not to beautify but to explore their identities and interests.

A new generation of alternative make-up artists eschews norms of attractiveness and paints their faces to suit their whims. Their visions of beauty defy definitions and take on the complexity of their influences through striking visuals.

Language of Rebellion

"I don't look at make-up to make me look the way the world wants me to. I started using make-up to make it more *me*," says Anoushka David, a Delhi-based stylist and image maker, who stands out for her eclectic fits and liberated approach to make-up. To her, make-up is a way to decorate her face, just like fashion is a way to decorate her body. Rhinestones, googly eyes, and even acrylic paints – nothing is off limits for David.

She doesn't care for technique and perfection. Instead, she focuses on using whatever is available and enjoying the process. "Initially, when I started painting with paint on paper, I felt the brush was too constricting. I love using tissue paper to create a smudged effect or using a sponge – basically anything with texture to create a pattern with colours that I enjoy," she says. Be it artists in history books or on Instagram, David gravitates towards rebellious figures such as Prince and Dadaist artist Raoul Hausmann. She also frequents the feed of model and beauty sensation Jazzelle Zanaughtti of

Anoushka David likes to play around with her make-up

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@uglyworldwide, who is known for their visceral make-up looks that lean into the idea of 'ugly' or conventionally unattractive beauty that we're currently seeing growing interest in, courtesy of the likes of Julia Fox, Doja Cat, and a host of TikTok-famous make-up artists.

Vibhuti Singh, a tattoo artist by profession, takes me back to her college days when experimenting with her look was met with raised eyebrows. "I wanted to push boundaries and give people that shock value. I hoped to provoke them to see past this façade of beauty we've created," she says. When people started projecting their assumptions onto her based on how she chose to look, she pushed harder and went a step further with her make-up. She adds, "If you wear something outrageous, it doesn't define you and your life. It is just a form of self-expression, but it does not speak about you as a person."

Over the years, Singh has developed a distinctive aesthetic. Edgy ornamental squiggles, Rorschach inkblot-esque forms, blackout lenses and strategic use of colour impart her full-face looks with unsettlingly beautiful quality. "My style is heavily influenced by the possible futuristic aesthetic. I always like to take inspiration from otherworldly creatures and many subcultures like goth and steam-punk. So my style is a fusion of futuristic plus goth," she tells me.

As a creative, she finds ideological resonance with artists like Jean-Michel Basquiat and Francis Bacon, whose raw imagery confronted themes of mortality and alienation. The sense of discomfort evoked by their paintings is also the space in which Singh operates and, conversely, finds comfort.

This concoction of different influences is driven by fantasy. World-building is integral to this fantasy, and the fine details are hashed out in Singh's brain. Watching a lot of sci-fi drove her to explore what an extraterrestrial aesthetic might look like. "I loved doing character make-up, and creating characters out of nowhere. I started building these backstories for the characters," she shares. For her, the foundational question is simple: How wild can you go if you don't have any restrictions on presenting and expressing yourself?

"If you wear something outrageous, it doesn't define you and your life. It is just a form of self-expression, but it does not speak about you as a person"

Singh's drag and sci-fi inspired looks

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It's in the Eyes

Singh likes to play around with her features, especially the eyes, and distort them unexpectedly. Nirrhit, a young fashion designer keen on make-up, also shares this approach. "I like experimenting with how you can draw an eye and change the shape with shadows and colours. I feel like eye shapes are so diverse worldwide, and combined with lid shapes, eyelashes and eyebrow placement, there's so much variation. Yet, you would see similarities based on genetics and hereditary factors, which I find intriguing."

"I feel like eye shapes are so diverse worldwide, and combined with lid shapes, eyelashes and eyebrow placement, there's so much variation. Yet, you would see similarities based on genetics and hereditary factors, which I find intriguing"

As he reconnected with his own tribal identity, Nirrhit moved away from the hardcore goth make-up he had embraced in the pandemic. His style has evolved to incorporate his personal experiences more meaningfully. "My family is from Cooch Behar, a small district in West Bengal. I grew up in Kolkata. I come from a mixed background, as the case usually is when you come to the northern part of West Bengal because of its proximity to Assam, Sikkim, and Nepal," he elaborates. Being back home and poring over family albums allowed him to explore the silhouettes and garments his Bhutia culture has to offer, such as the *bakhu* (a traditional, loose, cloak-style garment worn by the Bhutias, the ethnic Sikkimese people of Sikkim and Nepal.) His make-up is also inspired by indigenous art styles, such as the unique calligraphy that goes into *thangka* art. "When I do theatrical looks, I incorporate traditional elements such as powdering your face for a pale complexion and the exaggerated eye make-up seen in Tibetan Opera," he shares.

But in daily life, he feels he has toned things down quite a bit. Beyond practical considerations, this also has to do with the fact that he now identifies as a trans man. "If I do very exaggerated and stylised looks on myself, I get misgendered often. So that's also a factor that plays with how I have evolved my looks, styling, and fashion design," he shares.

Cinema is also a great source of inspiration for Nirrhit, particularly German expressionist films. The distorted and nightmarish imagery used to portray a sense of despair in the wake of World War I appeals to Nirrhit's darker sensibilities.

"I was inspired by *The Cabinet Of Dr*

Caligari. It was the first 'goth' look on-screen, that too on a male character," he says.

Serving Face

The plurality that characterises Nirrhit's identity and influences is largely queer, not just in the sense of being LGBTQIA+ but more in terms of divergence and standing out. It is no surprise that drag has had a deep impact on his approach to beauty. "Drag is one of the reasons why I even started exploring make-up. I was in class 7 or 8 at the time and was convinced that as a trans man, the only way I could wear make-up was by playing a drag queen," he says.

While the cultural impact of *RuPaul's Drag Race* is unparalleled, another lesser-known drag show stayed with him: *The Boulet Brothers' Dragula*, which focuses on, you guessed it, more horror-oriented, grotesque themes. Considering where Nirrhit comes from, it makes sense that the show caught his eye.

For him, drag goes beyond performance and artistry. "I learned about drag kings and how they do their make-up to masculinise their faces. That is also something I use in day-to-day life to masculinise my face," he shares.

Singh also owes a lot to early drag artists who broadened her horizons. Seeing their work motivated her to start doing full-face looks that combine elements of drag and goth culture. The visibility and circle of like-minded folks she's found on the internet also draw from similar sources. "I have a lot of drag artist friends and friends who follow alt-fashion. They live their lives like that, and it is a community that's slowly growing," she reveals.

A recent look created by Nirrhit for garments that he designed

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"If I do very exaggerated and stylised looks on myself, I get misgendered often. So that's also a factor that plays with how I have evolved my looks, styling, and fashion design"

Nirrhit's previous style leaned more towards hardcore goth

For David, it is not the aesthetics of drag but the inherent attitude that encouraged her: "The first time I ever saw a drag show clip, I was instantly drawn by how amazing and talented the queens are as human beings. That inspired me because I feel like there are many things I can do but not that well. It becomes overwhelming to be good at everything, but drag lets you do what you enjoy in a non-intense way where it's still fun."

MY BODY MY CHOICE

Freeze your eggs, and live your life? Wait, there's more...

Words **RITUPARNA SOM**

MAGAZINE KING

For most women, when it comes to matters of their bodies, the overarching thought has been led by: 'I am independent, and I get to decide what I want to do with my body and when.' And although a small percentage of females have this agency, biology does not support them. The reality is females are born with about one million eggs, and by the time they hit puberty, it declines to 300,000. Of these, only 300-400 are ovulated in a lifetime. Thankfully, science lends a helping hand. Of course, females can freeze their precious eggs until they decide when or if they want to have babies. The caveat is that the decision needs to be made early. Ergo Jennifer Aniston's public regret of not having done it when she was younger (better quality eggs) mainly because not enough people were talking about it.

"I've always been an independent working girl, and I don't want to decide when to get married or have babies just because I'm running out of time," says celebrity stylist and entrepreneur Tanya Ghavri. "Whenever it happens, I want to do it for the right reasons." Freezing one's eggs opens up a world of possibilities for many women – and it's not an exaggeration to say it saves a lot of them from committing to unhappy, possibly abusive, relationships to achieve the end goal of giving birth by a certain age.

Oocyte preservation isn't exactly dinner table conversation yet, but it's getting there. The process might not feel the same for everyone, but it is reasonably basic and doesn't vary much from one person to the other. The hiccups in India aren't just rooted in social stigma but prohibitive costs too. The process is expensive – it's around a couple of lakhs, and the cost of maintaining frozen eggs or embryos can be around ₹ 10,000-20,000 a month.

Ghavri has been vocal about her experience, hoping that it encourages more women to consider it, "It's 14-15 days of injections, where between the first and the sixth day, you will be injecting one to three injections of hormones in your stomach. After the sixth day, they will do sonography daily. The extraction happens on the 13th or 15th day. After which, you will feel dizzy for two or three days; make sure you rest because they administer general anaesthesia to extract the eggs."

Ghavri underwent this process when she was 35, at the start of 2022.

"What can change with age is the stimulation protocol, agonist or antagonist medication, and the success rate," explains Dr Tanaya Narendra, aka Dr Cuterus, embryologist, scientist and now the author of *Dr Cuterus—Everything No One Tells You About Your Body*. Her Instagram handle is full of entertaining and knowledgeable insights on sexuality and reproduction. Her advice is matter-of-fact. "There's no rosy way to paint this; it can be uncomfortable because you're getting supra-normal doses of what you would normally produce in your body. Some people experience ovulation pain. Your ovaries, which are normally the size of an almond, can swell up to the size of an orange. It's for like two to three weeks; it can be a very intense experience. You can have abdominal discomfort. We tell our patients not to do a lot of strenuous physical activity during this time because your ovary can twist on itself as it becomes heavy. These hormones stimulate mood swings, times 100."

The hiccups in India aren't just rooted in social stigma but prohibitive costs too. The process is expensive – it's around a couple of lakhs, and the cost of maintaining frozen eggs

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TRUTH OF THE MATTER

Sunaina Kwatra, an operating partner at Styl Capital, underwent three egg extraction and freezing rounds. "Nobody in my social circle was talking about it at the time [2008]. I never went to a gynaecologist who talked to me about it. But I knew I wanted to be a mom. I also knew that my career would always be a big part of my identity. And if I hadn't met the right person by the time I was 30, I wanted to freeze my eggs," she says. At 33, when she decided first to do it, Kwatra was living in India. "I thought I was going to get some amazing eggs. I'm still young. But in my first round, I got seven eggs. I think you expect a lot more at that age. And that kind of freaked me out. They put so many hormones in me that I had hyperstimulation. After the procedure, I gained almost eight kilos, all water weight. I was hospitalised and pretty traumatised. But I knew I needed to do this again because what I got wasn't enough." As a foreigner, Kwatra's choices of transporting her eggs or embryos from India were limited. It led her to do the second round in New York a couple of years later, where she extracted 14 eggs. She did the third round a few years later in Los Angeles, where the doctors extracted almost 20-21 eggs. "And the crazy thing is that in the round where I froze the most amount of eggs, which was 24, something happened during the transportation system. And by the time they got to the fertility centre, where I was making my embryos, they were no longer viable." Even someone as organised as Kwatra had to face the inevitability of how little control we have over our lives, no matter how many backup plans we have.

The myth of higher success rates in your 20s and 30s might be true, but it's important to distinguish how you define that success. "The two ways of measuring

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this is Clinical Pregnancy Rate or CPR, and Live Birth Rate or LPR," says Dr Narendra. "Just because I got my eggs frozen, fertilised, got them to put back into my body and am now pregnant, does not mean that's going to translate into a live birth." The Mayo Clinic says, "About 10 to 20 per cent of known pregnancies end in miscarriage. But the actual number is likely higher because many miscarriages occur very early in pregnancy – before you might even know about a pregnancy." As you grow older, in your mid-40s, the chances increase from 45 to 75 per cent.

That's the reality of conception. These are two examples of the many reminders to understand that freezing your eggs is an option, not a guarantee to have a child. And yes, the process, whether you do it once or multiple times, is just 15-20 days long. Even if intensive and uncomfortable, it offers you choice, time and freedom – things of value long denied to women. "Even though my experience wasn't the easiest, I would do it again if I needed to. I want to be an example of the opportunity for women to stand up for themselves. Support is needed from all of us to get there. We need to talk about it because so much of it is hidden," says Kwatra.

"I want to be an example of the opportunity for women to stand up for themselves. Support is needed from all of us to get there. We need to talk about it because so much of it is hidden"

"I was totally fine," says Ghavri after the process. "Maybe after the 10th day, I was slightly moody, which they had prepped me for. And on the extraction day, you feel a bit low on energy. After you finish, on the 12th today, they give injections again. Your ovary has expanded, so they need to shrink it and bring the system back to normal. I think the hype around freezing eggs and people getting worried is much more [exaggerated] than the actual process. It's just 15, maybe 20 days of your life. It meant having the freedom to do something for myself: My body, my decision. Tomorrow, if I have a partner, we can decide when the right time is for me to have a baby. If I decide not to have a partner and still want a baby, I have that option too. It means having a choice," she says.

PRALHAD - AN INSPIRING SAGA

Pralhad, a short film based on the life of late Shri Pralhad P. Chhabria, Founder, Finolex made its digital debut online and has received rave reviews as a feel-good inspirational story that elevates one's spirits and fuels positivity and productive thinking.

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The autobiographical account of Late Shri Pralhad P. Chhabria called 'There's No Such Thing as a Self-Made Man' has been turned into a short film aptly named "Pralhad" by Finolex, released on YouTube. The plot of the film focuses on Shri P. Chhabria's exponential commercial success during the nascent years of India's industrialisation,incorporating the key principles of Finolex Industries. Pralhad chronicles the incredible early steps of a 14-year-old boy who multiplied a meagre investment of Rs. 10 into a corporation worth Rs. 10,000 crores. Aabid Shamim, Annapurna Soni, and Chinamay Das have all appeared in supporting roles alongside Ritvik Sahore, who plays the main protagonist.

Among the film festivals that have praised the film are the Moscow International Film Festival, the London Film and Television Festival, and the Prague International Film Festival.

When asked about his excitement for the successful launch of Pralhad on YouTube, Mr. Prakash P. Chhabria, son of late Shri. Pralhad P. Chhabria said, "This story beautifully illustrates real values of life very closely. We hope that this film inspires all entrepreneurs starting today with the Indian entrepreneurship ethos. It is the ideal combination of understanding people and displaying a keen understanding of today's society. Late Shri Pralhad P. Chhabria, the Finolex founder, is proof of this."

"We are constantly looking for powerful stories that need telling, whether for the brands we work with or humanity at large. The life of Late Shri Pralhad P. Chhabria, the renowned founder of Finolex Group, was one such real life story that inspired Schbang Motion Pictures. " Though his life is worthy of a feature film, we are delighted to share this one incident with the world through our short film "Pralhad". The company he founded is an awe inspiring story worth studying for future generations of Indian entrepreneurs," said Harshil Karia, the film's producer and founder of Schbang.

Finolex, the company that has been providing high-quality products to customers in both urban and rural areas since 1981, has made a financial contribution to this Schbang Motion Pictures production. Finolex has become one of the most well-known brands in the Indian market under the sturdy leadership of Late Shri Pralhad Chhabra and his belief in the supremacy of engineering. The late founder's family business is thriving today serving loyal clients, with over 900 dealers and 21,000 retail touch points spread across India. Finolex has greatly aided India's plumbing and sanitation initiatives, as well as agricultural endeavours. The plot of the short film expertly incorporates each of these prodigy's ideal characteristics inspiring budding entrepreneurs.

BIG MOOD

From quilted jackets to puffer coats and ribbed jumpers, we've got you covered, quite literally, this season

Photographs **EMRE GÜVEN**
Styling **SELIN BURSALIOGLU**

MAGAZINE KING

Nylon coat, **Versace**; boots, **Stella McCartney**

MAGAZINE KING

Printed cotton vest, trousers, all **1 Moncler JW Anderson**; hood, down jacket, both **Geox**

MAGAZINE KING

MAGAZINE KING

Woollen dress, asymmetric parka, mules, all **Louis Vuitton**; stitched down jacket, **Hevo**

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Knit blouse, skirt, both **Issey Miyake**;
oversized jacket, **Brekka**;
velvet jacket, **Ermanno Scervino**;
boots, **Prada**

Overcoat, trousers, both **Acne Studios**;
nylon down jacket, **Yes Zee**;
shoes, **Church's**

Nylon jumpsuit, **Salvatore Ferragamo**; puffer coat, **Diego M**; boots, **Issey Miyake**

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Recycled cashmere dress, lace-up boots, both **Chloé**; technical jacket, **Add**

Woollen bustier dress, **Loewe**; reversible hooded parka, **Duno**; high boots, **Tod's**

Printed vest, skirt, nylon shorts, all **Dsquared2**; quilted jacket, **Barbour**; chunky boots, **Bally**

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Knit overalls, **MSGM**; quilted recycled coat, **K-Way**; sunglasses, **Gentle Monster x Coperni**

MAGAZINE KING

MAGAZINE KING

Nylon shirt, stitched shorts, both **Patou**; waterproof jacket, **Blauer**; boots, **Bally**

Casting SIMONE BART ROCCHIETTI at SIMO BART CASTING
Model NASTYA NOCHNAY at WHYNOT
Make-up ALESSANDRA CASONI using Armani Beauty Silk Foundation
Hair MAURIZIO KULPHERK at ETOILE MANAGEMENT

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SEE YOU OUTSIDE

Checkered capes, handcrafted sweaters and leather details make-up as the perfect wardrobe essentials this winter

Photographs ANDREA OLIVO
Styling ANNA SGURA

Wool fringed cape, skirt, both Roberto Cavalli; leather boots, Isabel Marant

MAGAZINE KIN

Jewel tone tweed jacket, mini skirt, hat, heart pendant necklace, cashmere socks, patent sandals, all Chanel

Silk ruffle slip dress, Givenchy;
double breasted jacket, Manila
Grace, suede boots, Gianvito Rossi

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Wool shirt, corset, skirt, socks, flats, all Dior

Cashmere turtleneck, Purotatto; coordinate coat and trousers, both Missoni; ankle boots, Steve Madden

Silk shirt, handmade cashmere sweater, pinstripe trousers, all Brunello Cucinelli; beret, Stetson

Viscose T-shirt, Red;
wool jacket, Herno;
tweed trousers;
flats, all Versace

Shirt, tie, embroidered dress, velvet collar coat, all Louis Vuitton; ankle boots, Gianvito Rossi

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Shirt, Zimmerman; double breasted blazer, co-ordinated velvet trousers, both Piombo; printed hat, Borsalino

Bodysuit, tweed trousers, N°21 By Alessandro Dell'Acqua; knitted cardigan, Gimos; belt, Ralph Lauren; boots, Isabel Marant

Casting SIMO BART ROCHHIETTI at SIMO BART CASTING
Model ANNA CONRADSEN at THE FACTORY
Make-up ALESSANDRA CASONI using Armani Beauty Luminous Silk Foundation
Hair GIUSEPPE MARSICANO at TWA AGENCY

MAGAZINE KING

ON THE STYLE RADAR

EMERALDS ARE FOREVER

House of Meraki's Gargi Rathi on her collaboration with Gemfields

GRAZIA: Tell us a bit more about how the collaboration materialised?
GARGI RATHI: Gemfields is a world-leading supplier of responsibly sourced Zambian emeralds. So, it was natural for us to collaborate with them. Our emeralds are responsibly sourced, and we follow a very intricate emerald-cutting process. Value addition takes place at every stage. We aspire to produce jewellery with emeralds that are traceable from mine to market. With Gemfields, we work together and bring the best end product to consumers. Each emerald is certified globally by the top certification labs. House of Meraki and Gemfields go hand in hand as we aim to follow the same ethos and have sustainability and responsibly sourced gemstones at the heart of our businesses.

G: Why did you gravitate towards emeralds for this collection?
GR: There are numerous reasons. The collection is called 'J'aime,' which translates as 'I love' in French or 'may God protect,' making it the ideal moniker. Emeralds are widely associated with hope, life, agility, and peace and are thought to possess healing properties, which are extremely important in today's world. People worldwide admire the precious stone and relate to them in diverse ways: in Hong Kong, for instance, they consider them good luck charms. They are universally associated with positivity, hope, and growth, which is why emerald is not only the centre stone of this collection but also the centre stone of House of Meraki – we pride ourselves on being the world's first emerald-only fine jewellery brand. All of our emeralds are responsibly sourced by Gemfields from Zambia. Our emerald jewellery collection glorifies the power within you.

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G: Take us through the jewellery design process.
GR: Emeralds are rare and valuable gems. When you work with them, the process is done by hand, right from the way it's mined while being cut and polished and set into a timeless piece of jewellery. Responsibly sourced Gemfields Zambian emeralds are cut and polished at our lapidary in Jaipur. Emerald cutting is an intricate process and a valued skill passed on from generation to generation. Our artisans have inherited this art from their ancestors and have years of experience unleashing the true colour and lustre inside an emerald. Versatility and thoughtfulness are at the forefront of our design process. Each piece is inspired by nature and our surrounding environment and dares to go beyond conventional designs by combining different shapes, shades, and sizes of emeralds to match the sublime equilibrium of nature. Italian artisans then mount the emeralds with the European aesthetic in our boutique atelier in London. We handpick each emerald for our high jewellery and fine jewellery pieces. They go through strict checks to ensure we use the finest Gemfields Zambian emeralds to create the jewellery pieces.

G: What are some of your favourite pieces from the collection?
GR: It is tough for me to choose because I love all the pieces in the collection. But if I were to pick, I would say the 'Florence' studs and the 'Electric' earrings. The 'Florence' studs are easy to wear yet so elegant. They are versatile and super chic. They are set with pear-shaped emeralds with diamonds around them and are reasonably priced, so they're perfect for gifting. The 'Electric' hoops are a statement in themselves. They look fabulous teamed with a black dress or worn during the day to lunch. They're fantastic for the summer as well. I love that one can wear the hoops any time of the day, and they're always head-turners. I also love the 'Juniper' ring; it is easy to stack. It has two dainty emeralds with a band of diamonds and can make any outfit sparkle.

G: What is in store for the brand in the future?
GR: House of Meraki has just launched on both leading global platforms: Net-a-porter and Farfetch. We believe that emeralds are rare and valuable, so we plan on going about it steadily. We hope to be in stores too, but we also want to produce a limited number of drop collections to keep emeralds' rarity and beauty intact. Emeralds are admired and loved worldwide, and we want every woman to own a Meraki emerald. We would like to consider our following collection before it drops in spring 2023.

IN THE REALM OF WAKANDA

Designer JJ Valaya tells us about the costumes designed for Wakanda Forever

GRAZIA: After *Coming To America*, this is your second collaboration with Academy Award Winning designer Ruth E Carter. How did it come about?

JJ VALAYA: Ruth and I first connected for *Coming To America*, the Eddie Murphy-starrer, a few years ago, and we had an excellent association then. We were then approached for the second *Black Panther* movie. There was an understanding that if all went well, we would collaborate on a third film. Our partnership with her is rooted in good energy and a great working relationship.

G: What was your process like while curating these specific looks for the character Queen Ramonda?

JJ: Costume design, unlike fashion design, is a separate process. In fashion, we deal with individuals who want to dress up and feel fabulous for a particular occasion. When it comes to costume design, you are talking about taking the vision of a director, the producer, and the story forward cohesively. That is something Ruth does brilliantly. The fact that she is an Academy Award winner and has a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame is testimony that she's one of the best. In the grand scheme of things, she designed nearly 2,100 outfits. Queen Ramonda's, played by the gorgeous Angela Bassett, were the most elegant and awe-inspiring, and because our partnership had worked beautifully in the first instance in creating costumes for royalty, we were a natural fit. The process is straightforward; it starts with a telephonic conversation, followed by sketches and mood boards, which are tweaked by us as much as we need to, making the muslins and sending them back for fittings. Parallelly, we start developing the textiles, colours, prints, and embroidery, and then we finally start working on the embellishments on the garments.

G: Queen Ramonda's looks showcase a rich colour palette, statement embellishments, and intricate craftsmanship. How long did it take to curate these outfits from scratch?

JJ: Her (Queen Ramonda) looks were the most elaborate and detailed in the film, and a process like this from start to finish took over eight months, and we were working from two different corners of the world to put it together seamlessly.

G: Out of the four character designs you came up with, which one was the most challenging to make?

JJ: Designing these kinds of clothes was out of my comfort zone because I do wedding clothes and Indian clothes. Getting my entire unit and team into a mind space where we had to do something from a different trajectory was exhilarating. I love challenges, and they make you evolve positively. Sure, there were a few hiccups here and there, but we didn't face any significant challenges, mainly because the chemistry between Ruth and me is positive and progressive.

G: How was it seeing your hand-curated designs on the big screen?

JJ: It's a different high seeing your designs on the big screen. More importantly, it was a big Hollywood production with many expectations riding on it. You can imagine how excited we were to see the designs we created, designed, and interpreted right here in India using our textiles would look in a film of that stature where the costumes are essentially a complete departure from anything we do. I went to see the movie on the first day, and it was very overwhelming, but what was humbling was a beautiful video message that Ruth had sent me to thank me for being a part of the film.

G: Do you think this collaboration has imprinted Indian fashion history on the world map?

JJ: Absolutely. Whenever any Indian designer does something tangible internationally, it is a step forward in unifying the world and making India come closer to the global market and vice versa. We are a growing economy, and we are laden with rich crafts and textiles; there is no reason why we can't take this internationally and make a mark. I want to thank all the designers reaching out to the more evolved markets to show them what is possible in India.

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INTO THE COSMOS

Gucci reimagines its Cruise 2023 collection

Alessandro Michele's exit from Gucci may have been a shocker to many in the fashion industry. Still, the former creative director ensured that his legacy was celebrated in the best way possible in his last campaign for the fashion house. The new 'Cosmogonie' campaign takes its name from the Cruise 2023 show and has been shot in a surrealist setting by photographers Mert & Marcus. With a celestial backdrop, the campaign highlights garments featuring silhouettes from the 1940s and incorporates some Victorian-era realness. In true Michele fashion, the designs are avant-garde and explore the Cruise 2023 show in finer detail.

SIX SUCCESSFUL ACHIEVERS OF 2022
ATTEMPTING TO ALTER THE WORLD

ISHITA SALUJA

Ishita Saluja started her organization in 2021 with the simple motto of empowering women. She wanted women to embrace their bodies and feel confident. She believed in body positivity and that beauty comes in all shapes and sizes. She wanted them to look and feel beautiful from inside and out. And in a span of two years, she has met some incredible people and has helped one thousand plus women in transforming their style and mindset. Steadily growing from strength to strength since inception. Her Instagram followings grew from a few hundred to a family of two lakh and forty-eight thousand followers. She is immensely grateful for all the love and support. Ishita says that It makes us work harder and takes us another step closer to achieving our shared mission- to make every woman feel confident and empowered. @ishitasalujaimageconsultancy, www.ishitasaluja.com, ishitasalujaimageconsultancy@gmail.com

RESHAM KAMBOJ

Resham Kamboj has been rated as the Best Tarot Card reader and healer by various top platforms in India. She is the founder of Tarot- Tree of Life, she's a compassionate healer and guides her clients with the help of various tools like Tarot card reading , angel therapy , past life regression, hypnotherapy , Pshyco therapy,automatic writing, Buddhist healing techniques and much more. She is known and awarded for her Psychic abilities and Teaching Skills She is one of the most loves Spiritual Mentors in India today. She can also speak to deceased loved ones both humans and animals and help bring closure to the family you can reach out to her on her Instagram and experience postive shift into her instagram handle is @tarottreeoflife

MAGAZINE KING

MITUSHI AJMERA

A wellness coach, internationally certified as a Master Functional Trainer, who trains other trainers and individuals alike. She is a renowned Fitness & Sports Nutritionist, Pilates and Yoga teacher, while being India's first Pilardio Instructor and a motivational TEDx speaker. Her work in wellness got her the Women Achiever's Award 2018 by News. She has been coaching worldwide for over 10 years. Her family background in business, past experience as a marketing consultant & her own injuries enable her to conduct safe, practical and effective wellness individual programs as well as corporate workshops for MNCs. As a blogger she regularly shares tips on health, nutrition, fitness and sports on various social media platforms.She coaches in-person as well as online. When she is not coaching, she can be found travelling, modelling or acting.https://instagram.com/mitushi_ajmeraigshid=ZmVmZTY5ZGE=

NEELAM NASEEB

An Energy therapist, a Tarot reader, Spiritual Coach, Healer and everything spiritual. This young seeker, who left her regular 9-5 job to pursue her journey to as a tarot reader and spiritual coach. Doing tarot readings is what excites her the most, with which she believes everyone gets an answer to what they are seeking. A helper she is, she loves to guide people. Little did she know that this is just the beginning of her journey. 1 year into her journey as a tarot reader, she started her own intention jewellery and crystals brand called MBM Crystals which now has more than 10000 customers worldwide. She had her own journey from doing Youtube videos just to seek some answers for herself to now being a helping hand to every person who is looking for the deeper meaning of life. There is more to come in her spiritual journey, and she is all set to get there

MANIK KAUR

Manik Kaur is a certified Grooming and Etiquette trainer from the British School of Etiquette , Mindful living coach, Personality Development Coach , Communication skills trainer and a Motivational Speaker by profession. An eloquent TEDx speaker , she is one of the First Personal Growth coaches in India who has combined the aspect of Grooming and Etiquette with compassion , empathy and Mindful Living . She has been addressing relevant issues on her social handles like Facebook and Instagram page called 'Mindful Living' by Manik Kaur . With a tag line of "Be your Best version inside and out "Manik is now penning a book on the same cause and is working towards making the art of Etiquette and Mindful Living available and accessible to all sections of

SWAPNA SANCHITA

Swapna Sanchita is a poet, a storyteller and an educator who studied engineering before obtaining a degree in management from IIM K.
She has been published in literary magazines such as Muse India, The Indian Periodical, Green Ink Poetry, Fiery Scribe Review, Trouvaille Review, Word Weavers, and many anthologies. Her poetry collection Des Vu was an Amazon Bestseller and won awards. Her children's books have received a lot of love from her young readers. Her Seven Stars Go Missing was another Amazon bestseller. Instagram @sanchitaswapna

OPPOSITES ATTRACT

Spruce up your holiday aesthetic with contrasting separates. Think: Oversized tailored blazers with micro minis

Drop earrings, **Swarovski**, ₹ 8,950

It's time to bid goodbye to your classic hoops for vibrant crystals that are making a comeback on the A/W runways. These square cut crystal drop earrings are sure to elevate your outfit like no other.

Oversized linen blazer, **H&M**, ₹ 2,999

A wardrobe must-have, a tailored blazer is the epitome of power dressing. Paired with anything from pencil skirts to baggy trousers and slip dresses, oversized blazers give a fresh spin to any look.

Padded clutch, **Charles & Keith**, ₹ 3,500

A cult classic, the padded clutch spells elegance and simplicity. Carry this textured piece for a neutral touch to a maximalist look. It's the perfect plus-one for a sophisticated statement.

A result of the cottagecore trend, corset tops have been cropping up all over our social media feeds. Sleeveless, cropped or strappy, style them up or down, they ensure you get that waist defining moment. Layer yours with your fave Tee or a crisp button down.

Denim corset, **Staud**, ₹ 21,597 approx

Chain mail bodycon skirt, **Pretty Little Thing**, ₹ 6,384 approx

Dating back to the 60s, we're seeing a resurgence of chainmail skirts on the A/W runways. Dripping in a hot pink shade, this mesh metal mini is a surefire way to insect glamour for the party season.

An everyday fail-safe fashion staple, a timeless pair of black heels can never let you down. Our pick? Rhinestone embellished strappy stilettos, a festive fave that goes with almost everything.

Strappy heels, **Steve Madden**, ₹ 12,990

Photograph IMAXTREE, Junior Fashion Stylist NISHTHA PARWANI

MAGAZINE KING

BEAUTY

Photograph ROMONA KEVEŽA/IMAXTREE, Words SANJANA SALUNKHE

HOW WE WORK IT

MAGAZINE KING

Where we spotted it

Romona Keveža's FW/23 showcase

Why we love it

Take cues from Romona Keveža's bridal show for the holiday season. The models were spotted with exaggerated and smoky eyes paired with white satins and tulles – making the fluttering, smoky-eyed look the highlight. It's sophisticated, dramatic, and perfect for year-end celebrations.

How to get it

1. Prep your skin with a primer. Follow with a foundation to get a light and breathable base. Apply concealer to cover blemishes and dark circles. Blend well for a seamless finish.
2. Apply a bronzer to the high points of your cheekbones, forehead, and nose for a sculpted look. Follow with a high-shine highlighter to define the brow bone, bridge of the nose, and Cupid's bow.
3. Apply an eye primer before the eye look to ensure the make-up lasts longer. First, start with a lighter black eyeshadow to create a base. Blend it outwards. Now, go in with a black eyeshadow, dab it across the entire eyelid and blend outwards. Extend the same eyeshadow on the lower lash line and blend. Highlight the inner corners with a silver eyeshadow. Dab the same silver highlighter along the eyelid for some shine. Follow with lots of mascara.
4. Finish the look with glossy pink lipstick, groomed eyebrows, and a sleek bun.

1 Wet n Wild Color Icon Bronzer in 'Palm Beach Ready', ₹650
2 e.l.f Cosmetics Hydrating Camo Concealer,₹ 600
3 Colorbar Intensely Rich Kajal, ₹ 170
4 Natasha Denona Mini Xenon Eyeshadow Palette, ₹2,450
5 L'Oréal Paris Infallible 24HR Fresh Wear Foundation in a Powder, ₹ 1,099
6 Dior Diorshow Kabuki Brow Styler in 'Brown', ₹ 2,800
7 Dear Dahlia Allure Shine Lustrous Lip plumper in 'Attraction', ₹ 3,100
8 Anastasia Beverly Hills Iced Out Highlighter, ₹ 3,100

MAGAZINE KING

Give the classic red lip an update with a metallic tone instead of a matte finish. Keep the colour saturated on the lip, and choose a lipstick finish with some shine.

GET THE LOOK WITH:
CHANEL Rouge Allure 127 Rouge D'or

MAGAZINE KING

MAGAZINE KING

A sculpted glossy lip paired with a wash of gold on the eyelids and long wispy lashes scream the ‘new-age’ party girl look.

GET THE LOOK WITH:
CHANEL Shimmer (base), **CHANEL** Bronze Universal, **CHANEL** Ombré Première Laque (46 lumiére), **CHANEL** Stylo Yeux Waterproof (Bois Noir), **CHANEL** Rouge Allure (Inattendu), Le Volume Révolution De **CHANEL**, **CHANEL** Poudre Lumière (20 Warm Gold), **CHANEL** Powder Blush (82 Re ex), **CHANEL** Le Vernis (939 Singularité), **CHANEL** Earrings

MAGAZINE KING

Elevate your party look with a graphic glam cat eye. Play with warm tones, and fill the lid with a glittery champagne shade to make it more festive.

GET THE LOOK WITH:
Rouge Allure Laque (80 Timeless), **CHANEL** Les 4 Ombres Tweed (04 Tweed Brun Et Rose), **CHANEL** Powder Blush (82 Reflex), **CHANEL** Bronze Universal, **CHANEL** Poudre Lumière (20 Warm Gold), Le Volume Révolution De **CHANEL**, CHANEL Earrings

MAGAZINE KING

GET THE LOOK WITH:
CHANEL Ombré Première Laque (33 Lamé Bronze), **CHANEL** Les 4 Ombres Tweed (03 Tweed Fauve), **CHANEL** Poudre Lumière (20 Warm Gold), **CHANEL** Stylo Yeux Waterproof (Bois Noir), Le Volume Révolution De **CHANEL**, **CHANEL** Stylo Yeux Waterproof (Cuivre Doré)

THE YEAR IN BEAUTY

Thanks for the pops of colour, glitter, and subtlety for the ages

Words **AALIYA PANJU**

MAGAZINE KING

Beauty in 2022 was a lot of things: A nod to the 90s, graphic liner patterns, Gen Z television drama inspo, and overall busy looks. All in all, it's safe to say that the beauty industry exploded, leaving behind glam and polarising opinions in its wake.

Some big 'wow' moments on the runway and in editorials made our jaws drop, but simple social media posts were not lagging too far behind. From home remedies that sang true to home to Tiktok and Instagram Reel-inspired trends (with little to no backing from experts), some of us returned to our roots, and some now swear by the K-Beauty bible.

Through all the highs and lows of inspired make-up looks and self-care routines, there are a few trends that made a mark and were either chucked into the bin immediately or will continue to be with us for years to come; and may even reserve a spot in the classics.

ON THE MONEY

Here are five beauty products that won't be going anywhere anytime soon:

Charlotte Tilbury Matte Revolution - Pillow Talk

A crowd favourite this year, this velvety, nude pink lip colour dominated celebrity looks all year round. The lipstick's popularity was so apparent that it almost sold out on most platforms and outlets. Perfect for every look in the book, this nude pink lippy is here to stay.

The Ordinary AHA 30% + BHA 2% Peeling Solution

The Ordinary's launch in India was widely covered, owing to the brand's popularity. One such product was its AHA 30% + BHA 2% Peeling Solution which acts as an exfoliator, aiding pore congestion, pigmentation, and skin texture.

Rare Beauty Soft Pinch Liquid Blush

We always stan a beauty queen, and Selena Gomez really knows what she's doing with the formula used for Rare Beauty products. The Soft Pinch Liquid Blush was a Tiktok sensation this year, gaining popularity for its pigmented formula, which is buildable and not a hassle to apply.

Cerave Facial Cleanser

Cerave's facial cleansers are widely accepted as the norm for sensitive skin. Targeting various skin health issues without leaving your skin feeling squeaky clean, their hydrating cleanser has become a crowd favourite.

Dyson Air Wrap

From messy waves to red carpet curls to a salon-style blowout, it's all possible with a single tool and heat protection.

From home remedies that sang true to home to Tiktok and Instagram Reel-inspired trends (with little to no backing from experts), some of us returned to our roots, and some now swear by the K-Beauty bible

TREND ALERT

Apart from the products, the beauty trends that took off in 2022 were no small feat. From giving foundation and heavy application to the boot to nails that took us right back to when we were teens, we've seen it all this year. Here are three trends that stood out:

Siren lips

Foxy, trendy, and with a hint of classic – this lip trend blew up this year. A brown liner blended in, and some clear gloss or a lighter shade of your lippy on the inside make this trend stand out. Perfect for a classy soirée or a night out with the gang, this is a must-try.

Ombrè blush

What's better than one rosy blush? Two. This trend went viral when a TikToker used two different shades of liquid blush and blended them in to create a perfectly plump, pink look. It caught on and is now being improvised (liquid blush mixed with a similar shade in powder), giving your make-up a sculpted finish.

Swirls for days

The nail swirl trend took off in 2021 but was big throughout 2022. Swirls with different widths, contrasting colours, swirls, French tips, and much more was experimented with this year. With a pop of colour or an understated monochrome match, when you have nails that look good, you pretty much don't need anything else.

MAGAZINE KING

THE NEW WAY

The beauty space is ever-evolving. There's always so much going on, different practices from the norm and a dynamic way of doing things. So, the last category covers trends that changed the way we approached beauty this year:

Make me look like a glazed doughnut:

Hailey Bieber's viral glazed doughnut look has the skinfluencers in a chokehold. Achievable with make-up, the base of this trend, however, stems from good skin health. Start by gently exfoliating your face to achieve a smooth canvas to work on, use a balm or oil to prep the base, and go on with your routine. Make sure you don't use too much oil and avoid using it in the high parts of your face to avoid looking too oily or wet.

Balancing your skin cycle

The base of skin cycling stems from 'balance': balancing your skincare routine to ensure you reap all the benefits of the products you're using. It helps your skin barrier to recover and skips all the irritation and inflammation that comes hand in hand with over-exfoliation or an overdose of retinoids. Use a four-night schedule; exfoliation night, retinoid night, recovery night, recovery night, repeat, and you've got yourself hopped onto skin cycling.

Hungry for skincare?

Even though this was very popular in 2022, it also received some criticism. The consensus was that this method was only suitable for some skin types. Essentially, you need to apply a layer of moisturiser before and after applying retinol to skip the adverse effects of the latter. It has worked wonders for people sensitive to retinol-based products and may reserve a permanent spot on 2022's skincare roster.

When asked about the one beauty trend she sees sticking around, make-up artist Puneet B Saini said, "Like all other years, beauty has seen a lot of changes, and the one thing that has become apparent is that good skin is here to stay. Taking care of it is equivalent to walking around confidently without any make-up because good skin can be the ultimate confidence builder. And, elevating make-up application to greater heights, because the skin underneath is being taken care of, which, in turn, acts as the perfect canvas to create a stunning result."

Photographs INSTAGRAM

BEAUTY REPORTER

Candace Marino

LOOKING GOOD

Hollywood's top facialist tells us how to get the best skin ever

Photograph IMAXTREE.COM/AKRIS & INSTAGRAM/THE LA FACIALIST
Words SANJANA SALUNKHE

The secret to Kourtney Kardashian's perfect face or Miranda Kerr's glowing skin is having Candace Marino (aka 'The LA Facialist') on speed dial. The Beverly Hills-based facialist is known as the 'skin whisperer', and is credited for developing unique techniques and custom facial procedures with a self-taught sculpting technique that drains lymph nodes and promotes blood circulation. On her recent visit to India at Le Mill for a pop-up event, we met with the beauty guru to learn about her skincare rules and secrets.

MAGAZINE KING

How To Get Your Best Skin Ever

"I am adamant about skincare at home because that's how you get good skin. People can get facials anywhere, but achieving good skin is rooted in a certain lifestyle," says Marino.

#1 Cleansing

Make sure to clean in the evening. "When you skip cleansing, you don't allow your skin to regenerate in the evening because it's clogged with make-up, dirt, and oil. And if you sleep with make-up on, it will further dilate the pores, causing congestion," she explains.

#2 Exfoliation

Exfoliating is the key to hydration, says Marino. If you use moisturisers and serums on dry skin, you thicken the outermost layer of the skin, making it drier and dead. When you exfoliate, you remove the dead skin. This helps better absorption of products. "I use a scrub, peel pad, or mask twice a week, depending on my skin needs."

#3 Triple SPF

"Wear sunscreen daily because you don't want to use ingredients to lighten and brighten your skin without it. If you miss applying sunscreen, it will lead to pigmentation," she says. Besides following the three-finger rule for sunscreen, Marino also believes in the triple sunscreen method. "I like to use iS Clinical Extreme Protect SPF 30 as my moisturiser, Supergoop! Glow Screen SPF 40 as my make-up primer, an illuminator, and a tinted SPF is like my make-up."

#4 Antioxidants

Any antioxidant-enriched or pigment-inducing product should be part of your daily routine. "Ingredients like kojic acid, niacinamide, and vitamin C are all ingredients that will help reduce pigmentation and work on a clearer complexion," says Marino.

#5 Retinol

Retinol is not only the gold standard for anti-ageing but also acne. "It helps with wrinkles and fine lines; it helps lift the pigment from the skin because it creates micro shedding and stimulates collagen and its anti-acne. I know many people, even those over 30 and 40, who suffer from adult acne because of hormonal shifts. Retinol is more preventative and keeps the skin nice and resurfaced," she adds.

ALL EYES ON THIS

Meet the newest standout brands on *Grazia*'s beauty desk

Brand: ORIMII

Stand out star:
Mineral Sun Shield Serum

Why: It is a mineral sunscreen that is free of chemicals and better suited for sensitive skin. Mineral sunscreens sit on the skin's surface and, unlike chemical filters, do not get absorbed into the bloodstream. This means that they are safe, including for pregnant and nursing women.

More about the brand: Orimii was founded to provide safe skincare for pregnant and breastfeeding women. The founder of Orimii, Sneha Agarwal, says, "My vision for Orimii is to help women look and feel beautiful at every stage. Our mission is to simplify information and make skincare gentle, effective, and 100 per cent safe for women during pregnancy (and beyond). We want to break the cliché that mommy skincare is just about stretch marks and become the one-brand solution to the skincare woes of all pregnant and expecting mamas."

Grazia loves:
Orimii's Mineral Sun Shield Serum, which comes with broad-spectrum SPF 30+ and lightweight formula to protect the skin against UVA and UVB rays while leaving no cast behind. It also comes with a delicate fragrance to prevent any morning sickness and nausea for pregnant women.

MAGAZINE KING

Brand: LOVE, INDUS

Stand out star:
Amrutini Precious Potion Vital Cream

Why: Amrutini Precious Potion is a rich, luscious moisturiser with ingredients sourced from east Bengal, Darjeeling, and Assam. This potion is rooted in the time-honoured tradition of *shata-dhauta-ghrita*, where copper's therapeutic qualities lend themselves to an alchemical process that promises youth and vitality.

More about the brand: Love, Indus celebrates the creator's homes – India and New York. It is a love letter from one to the other, where the brand combines rare regional riches from India with New York's transformative tech to create potent potions. Founder and creator Surbhee Grover says, "I knew then that I had to find a way to take these ingredients and customs that I was intimately familiar with, leverage my background in innovation, and apply the best technology New York has to offer and that's how the idea of Love, Indus was born."

Grazia loves: The Amrutini Precious Potion Vital Cream is our personal favourite. Fine lines and drooping skin are signs of a weakening skin barrier. This protein-rich cream, crafted with *muga* silk and Makaibari silver tips imperial tea, helps strengthen the barrier and keeps the skin supple.

Photograph IMAXTREE.COM/GAUCHÈRE
Words SHANAYA KUMAR

Photograph INSTAGRAM

CLASS ACT

MAGAZINE KING

Paris Hilton's beauty routine is as extra as you think – and we are here for it

Paris Hilton – in her Juicy Couture tracksuits – was the OG influencer for every early-00 kid. Not much has changed. Businesswoman, heiress to the Hilton empire, and founder of Paris Hilton Fragrances, she's never really been out of the spotlight and has been 'sliving' (a Hilton favourite, sliving is a blend of slaying and living your best life), with her 20.9 million followers on Instagram. She claims to be obsessed with skincare more than make-up and loves pampering herself with hi-tech beauty tools. Here, we get the star to tell us more about her *extra* beauty routine, her at-home spa centre, and why she will always love the aughts.

A 'sliving' beauty routine

"I'm obsessed with skincare and using my cryotherapy machine and hyperbaric chamber in my 'Sliving Spa' that finds a place in my house. I like to be preventive – it's important to any beauty routine. I love my Omnilux L.E.D. light Therapy and staying out of the sun."

Signature look secret

"My signature look is a modern take on the classic Marilyn Monroe winged eyeliner look with glowing skin and a glossy lip."

Top glow hack

"I put my face in a large bowl filled with water and ice, before my make-up to help with de-puffing, especially after long flights."

Beauty bag essentials

"My Ruby Rush Fragrance, Fenty Beauty Lip Gloss Bomb, Charlotte Tilbury Airbrush Bronzer."

On the dresser

"I love the Unite Deep Conditioner for the hair, and the Olaplex No.8 Bond Intense Moisture Mask is amazing. A few staple skincare products you will always see me using are U Beauty Resurfacing Compound, U Beauty Super Hydrator, and Omnilux L.E.D. FaceMask, Foreo Iris Eye Massager, Barbara Sturm Glow Drops, and ToGoSpa Under Eye Patches."

Recharge and unwind ritual

"I love getting massages and facials. I also love taking bubble baths with candles."

Scent stories

"I have all 29 of my Paris Hilton fragrances on my dresser, and I wear them all the time. I may change my fragrance depending on my mood, but Ruby Rush has remained constant. It is a true symbol of confidence and power. I love the colour red, it radiates energy and is so hot. The notes of juicy cherry, hibiscus nectar, and whipped cream create a sensual fragrance. I love to layer fragrances, shower gel, and body lotion and spray your fragrance all over."

A timeless trend

"I love the 2000s make-up trend, as many of the looks are inspired by my looks!"

Biggest beauty splurge

"At the Waldorf Astoria in the Maldives during my honeymoon, I did this 24KT gold facial, and my face was glowing like gold after I did it – it was incredible!"

A hi-tech tool worth the hype

"It's a tie between my four-person hyperbaric chamber and my three-person cryotherapy machine."

Beauty mantra

"I believe beauty comes from within and shines through kindness. It matters more than what's on the outside."

Charlotte Tilbury Airbrush Bronzer
Paris Hilton Fragrances Ruby Rush
Fenty Beauty Gloss Bomb Universal Lip Luminizer

AN ENDURING LEGACY

For the Chinese community in India, food serves as a unifier and a means of retaining their cultural identity

WORDS **PRATIKSHA ACHARYA**

With my meagre pocket money when I was in college, Matunga's lush, green locality promised quite a few culinary gems. Besides the popular haunts like Cafe Madras, Ramashray and the student-favourite DP's, a hole-in-the-wall establishment always stood out. Chinaman, with its lacklustre tables and dimly-lit ambience, has always been a hit with students, thanks to its vast portions of atomic-orange coloured triple schezwan rice, chilly chicken and more. It was *desi* Chinese in its most authentic form, and the only cuisine I was familiar with. I made peace with it.

Until I found myself poring over a 25-page-long menu at Ling's Pavilion in Mumbai's Colaba, one of the older Chinese establishments frequented by tourists and faithful patrons alike. It was here I got my first taste of authentic Chinese food (or at least as close as you could get to it in Mumbai).

India has always had a long-standing love affair with Chinese food before the pan-Asian cuisine invasion, even though, in the process, we have adapted it to our tastebuds (more sauce, more masala and a lot of orange food colouring). While the love for Indian Chinese hasn't wavered, a more aware and well-travelled food enthusiast is on the hunt for the real deal. Shunning the comfort of a good plate of hakka noodles and chicken manchurian, there's now a growing demand for Cantonese and hakka food, minus the Indian embellishments. But how has this change come about?

The wok is China's gift to the world and is an integral part of their cooking culture

Shunning the comfort of a good plate of hakka noodles and chicken manchurian, there's now a growing demand for Cantonese and hakka food, minus the Indian embellishments

CHARTING THE COURSE

Long considered the birthplace of Indian Chinese food, Tangra in Kolkata was all but a marshy wetland in 1910 when the Hakka Chinese moved from the city's centre to turn it into a food hub, where they set up their leather goods business and mostly worked as shoe-makers. Edward Liao, a fourth-generation Chinese descendant and a chef de partie at Sienna Store, says the Hakka were a nomadic community from the north of China that migrated every hundred years and finally headed towards India from the Guangdong province to establish businesses. "Two communities migrated to India, the Cantonese and the Hakka. While my family was initially into the leather business, we gradually opened up restaurants when the government ordered that the leather industry in Tangra shut down. With financial issues mounting, we turned our attention to cooking," he says. While they belonged to the same country, the Hakka and Cantonese communities had different diets. Liao says, "While Cantonese food is a lot simpler and milder, Hakka food focuses primarily on fermentation

MAGAZINE KING

The open-faced *siu mai* dumpling is a popular snack in Cantonese cuisine

"Traditionally, we make fried rice with old cooked rice lying in the fridge, which made it sticky, but we started using long-grain basmati rice in restaurants as people here really enjoyed it"

MAGAZINE KIOSK

and cures and fatty meats due to the constant migration of the community. Cantonese is better known in the Chinese hierarchy of cuisines."

Liao's family has been in the restaurant business for a long time. Still, the soft-spoken chef emphasises that while they keep introducing hakka-style dishes into their menu, they could be better received than other dishes due to the lack of spices and the fermentation reigning supreme. "Back in the day, when the Chinese opened restaurants, they had to ensure that the menu suited the Indian palate. Traditionally, we make fried rice with old cooked rice lying in the fridge, which made it sticky, but we started using long-grain *basmati* rice in restaurants as people here really enjoyed it."

NEW WAVE

The only legitimate Chinatown of India might be in Kolkata, but Mumbai has its pockets too. It is said that the first-ever Chinese restaurant opened in Mumbai in the late 1890s in the city's red light district. It was Yick Sen Ling, a Chinese immigrant from the Cantonese region of China with his restaurant, Nanking, who finally set the course for Chinese cuisine in India. After buying out the restaurant from the original owner, Ling hired Chinese seafarers to cook some of their regional favourites in Nanking's kitchen. To say that business picked up would be an understatement as patrons flocked in to sample Cantonese delicacies unheard of. However, the Sino-Chinese War in 1962 brought ruin and neglect before business picked up again. Everyone wanted a table at Nanking, from industrialists to the who's who of Bollywood. Authentic Chinese cuisine had finally arrived in the city, showing no signs of slowing down. With the success of Nanking, other Chinese institutions like China Garden, Flora and Kamling flourished. Once upon a time, China Garden, helmed by Nelson Wang was the hottest address in town. Home to the "Chicken Manchurian", the restaurant was frequented by the Kapoors and even industrialists like the Godrej family.

Ryan and Keenan Tham fondly recall family meals that involved community-style eating. While their father was Chinese, their mother hailed from Kolkata, and their meals were always an amalgamation of both cultures. "There would be times when we would have beef chilly with *dal* and rice. We got the best of both worlds. Because our grandfather used to run Mandarin, we ate many of our meals there, and the fish ball soup is something we loved having over there."

In most Chinese homes, meals are community-driven

The Thams are among the most popular Chinese families in the city to have patronised the cuisine. Running establishments dishing their take on Chinese cuisine is ingrained in their system, given that they spend much of their time in their family-run restaurants. So, when it came to making the big decision about their careers, the two brothers knew they wanted to carry the legacy of their ancestors forward. Sitting down for a meal at their popular pan-Asian restaurant, KOKO, which is in the city's business hub in Lower Parel, the brothers argue over when their grandfather made his way to India. While the history is a bit cloudy, their grandfather had a humble beginning in the city where he started with a

Photographs (dumpling series) YUSUF LOKHANDWALA

"I keep inviting my friends over to eat what my family eats and to introduce them to a world beyond chilli chicken, hot garlic chicken and all that because Chinese food is about clean eating"

small restaurant that quickly became so popular that he took on two restaurants (Kamling and Mandarin) and opened two salons while also being a translator for the government. The enterprising Tham had migrated for better prospects, and lady luck had been very kind to him.

But even as the popularity of Chinese food started waning in Mumbai, with all the OG restaurants shuttering down and the food quality deteriorating, the Tham brothers knew it was time for a new beginning. First came Henry Tham in 2005 in Colaba, combining fine dining with a generously stocked bar, two concepts unheard of. The fact that the food and beverage space paved the way for creativity and innovation drew the brothers to it, besides being self-confessed foodies. "My life revolves around eating," quips Ryan. After Henry Tham shut down in 2010, the brothers focused on creating more experiences while ensuring that the food stayed top-notch. From the hip nightclub, Trilogy in Juhu to the Good Wife in Bandra-Kurla Complex and finally opening up KOKO and Foo (the latter is mushrooming across the city rapidly), the brothers' entrepreneurial sense is what pushed them forward. "For us, third-generation Chinese descendants, it is imperative to be current. My father was ahead of his time and was the first to introduce a degustation menu in a Chinese restaurant. There was a right mix of a good atmosphere and food to keep a place running. And alcohol will always be a big game player, which is why we curate our bar menu at KOKO according to the trends in the space," says Keenan. The brothers ensure that their restaurants keep reinventing themselves, with KOKO having pop-ups, a recent one that offered Cantonese delights, to Foo's incredibly inclusive menu that also caters to a Jain audience.

Edward Liao and his family celebrate the Chinese New Year

Re-opened in the 1960s, Kamling shut down for business in 2019

Clay-baked chicken from the Changshu province has a humble origin story

MAGAZINE KING

FROM CHINA, WITH LOVE

Given its complexity and little-understood phenomenon, how does one carry forward a Chinese cuisine legacy? The answer is simple: By taking a significant risk.

With its industrialists and young-generation diners, Pune is quickly becoming a gastronomic hub. Newly-opened Tao-Fu at the JW Marriott property is the perfect example of it. Run by Master Chef Fu Lei, the restaurant highlights Sichuan cuisine in a big way, which primarily focuses on Sichuan peppercorns as the core ingredient. Chef Lei strongly emphasises that the cuisine is the perfect blend of flavours by melding the numbing power of sichuan peppercorns with sweetness and saltiness to create a medley that is new to the Indian palate but also comforting. After dining and touring all over the city, Chef Lei realised that there was a gap in the Indian market for an authentic Chinese restaurant, and that's how Tao-Fu came into being. Armed with his mother's recipes, Chef Fu Lei's Tao-Fu lays it strong with punchy dishes like mapo tofu, clay-baked chicken and the *pièce de résistance*, the Beijing-style peking duck, which is carved right at the table with quick precision making the dining experience memorable. "I don't plan on doing fusion dishes at the restaurant because doing away with tradition also does away with an authenticity which is key here," says Chef Lei.

Back home in Tangra, Edward Liao is hard at work trying to bring his culture to the forefront one step at a time. "I keep inviting my friends over to eat what my family eats and to introduce them to a world beyond chilli chicken, hot garlic chicken and all that because Chinese food is about clean eating."

As they evolved, diners yearn for the taste of authenticity, these folks are leading the charge and unleashing the dragon in the best way possible.

SALUD

From the top cities around the globe to the ones in the Indian subcontinent, cocktail culture is on the rise, and at the heart of it, besides a common love of creating great, modern experiences, is community building

Words **MEHERNAAZ DHONDY**

Somewhere in the post-pandemic era, the cocktail has seen a definite restyling. While traditionally, drinks have rested in the background with all the big energy focussed around what's on your plate, we've seen an emergence of a vibrant cocktail culture committed to creating great experiences. There's a premiumisation afoot from the upskilled consumer who spent nearly two years at home making cocktails. It's time to let the folks behind the bar build these sensory experiences for you – which is why bartending, a craft and an art to host someone in a small space and tap into their mood and fix what's in their glass – the liquids, the garnish, the measures – is also seeing a new age reinvention of its role. This is where World

"It's (bartending) a rewarding career – it's not just something you do to get by. Still, it can flourish and lead to many other avenues like diversifying into sales and marketing, events and even a role like mine"

Class steps in, a platform that supports, trains and inspires bartenders worldwide; it is all about community – getting people into one space for a shared collective experience. How well you host someone, how you think outside the box, create modern classics, and eventually balance skill and flavour to create something never tasted before – these were also some of the key lookout points at the recently-held World Class Global Finals (For Global Bartender of the Year) in Sydney.

Where does India fit into this global index of cocktail culture? "India is catching up", says Evonne Eadie, World Class and National Advocacy Lead, "The best bars in India are on par with the best bars in the world – they're just fewer of them, that's all. Some of the standouts include Lair, Sidecar, and Hoots."

Incidentally, all these places have been recognised globally in the top 100 bars in the world or called out by industry professionals. "You eventually want the kitchen and bar working together – shared knowledge, utensils, and a love for culinary technique. Working in silos doesn't help build these experiences. At Lair, in New Delhi, they've got it down pat – the menu, the bar, the ambience, the staff. Sidecar, also in New Delhi, is a very customer focussed space. In Mumbai, there's Perch, Opa, Bombay Canteen and O'Pedro – these bars give that due respect to the bartenders and feature what they are doing and putting on a great show."

MAGAZINE KING

IN GOOD SPIRIT

While building respect for the profession means elevating the status of the bartender to shoulder with that of a chef, it's been a challenging road ahead, especially in India. Aashi Bhatnagar, who works out of the popular Cobbler & Crew in Pune and is a World Class (India's leg) finalist shares her side of the story, "I don't believe that bartending is a male-oriented profession. Everyone has always encouraged and supported me to create magic behind the bar throughout my journey. If a woman can fly a plane, she can also run a bar." Dedication, zeal to create something extraordinary and never-ending passion are three key ingredients she lists as essential. Besides a natural flair to create and an affinity for the hospitality industry, Eadie opines that an upskilled bartender would need to have a good knowledge of the brand of spirit and how each category is created. "There's still a bit of stigma with women working with alcohol in India, which is something that my other brand ambassador team and I are looking to shine the light on. It's a rewarding career – it's not just something you do to get by. Still, it can flourish and lead to many other avenues like diversifying into sales and marketing, events and even a role like mine", says Eadie.

Globally, the trend is all about conscious bartending. According to Eadie, it's about reducing waste, pushing seasonal, and choosing something that's locally available rather than using ingredients that have to be imported and lead to a carbon footprint. Jenna Ba, global brand ambassador, reserve, and a global citizen, given the number of countries her work has taken her to, says current trends include tea and spices. "Infusions like a Darjeeling tea, for example. Tea has become an expression of a place – you need to build on that and add your flavours." She also highlights spices like chilli and cardamom pods. "But there is a science to spices – it's a bible – it's about breaking down the chemical compounds and then figuring what flavours you can concoct." At the heart of cocktail culture, the agenda is all about pushing to explore the local first. "I think culture is one of the most important things and so many answers lie in that. I love street food; I need to go to the local market, where local and old people are drinking – I go to a bar and ask the bartender what's happening. A bar is a community hub, after all." Ba explains that drinks travel beyond borders and identifies cross-pollinated trends in terms of what people drink. "Curiosity is what eventually creates all these diverse flavours", she signs off.